



THE SUNY CHARTER SCHOOLS INSTITUTE

*RENEWAL RECOMMENDATION REPORT
EXPLORE CHARTER SCHOOL*

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INTRODUCTION & REPORT FORMAT

This report is the primary means by which the SUNY Charter Schools Institute (the “Institute”) transmits to the State University of New York Board of Trustees (the “SUNY Trustees”) its findings and recommendations regarding a school’s Application for Charter Renewal, and more broadly, details the merits of a school’s case for renewal. The Institute has created and issued this report pursuant to the ***Policies for the Renewal of Not-For-Profit Charter School Education Corporations and Charter Schools Authorized by the Board of Trustees of the State University of New York*** (the “SUNY Renewal Policies”).¹

THE INSTITUTE MAKES ALL RENEWAL RECOMMENDATIONS BASED ON

A SCHOOL’S
APPLICATION
FOR CHARTER
RENEWAL

INFORMATION
GATHERED DURING
THE CHARTER TERM

ACADEMIC
PERFORMANCE

FISCAL SOUNDNESS

LEGAL COMPLIANCE

RENEWAL
EVALUATION VISIT



Most importantly, the Institute analyzes the school’s record of academic performance and the extent to which it has met its academic Accountability Plan goals.

1. Revised September 4,
2013 and available at: www.newyorkcharters.org/SUNY-Renewal-Policies/.

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REPORT FORMAT

This renewal recommendation report compiles the evidence below using the ***State University of New York Charter Renewal Benchmarks*** (the “SUNY Renewal Benchmarks”),² which specify in detail what a successful school should be able to demonstrate at the time of the renewal review. The Institute uses the four interconnected renewal questions below for framing benchmark statements to determine if a school has made an adequate case for renewal.



Additional information about the SUNY renewal process and an overview of the requirements for renewal under the New York Charter Schools Act of 1998 (as amended, the “Act”) are available on the Institute’s website at: www.newyorkcharters.org/renewal/.

RENEWAL QUESTIONS

1. IS THE SCHOOL AN ACADEMIC SUCCESS?
2. IS THE SCHOOL AN EFFECTIVE, VIABLE ORGANIZATION?
3. IS THE SCHOOL FISCALLY SOUND?
4. IF THE SUNY TRUSTEES RENEW THE EDUCATION CORPORATION’S AUTHORITY TO OPERATE THE SCHOOL, ARE ITS PLANS FOR THE SCHOOL REASONABLE, FEASIBLE, AND ACHIEVABLE?

² Version 5.0, May 2012, available at: www.newyorkcharters.org/SUNY-Renewal-Benchmarks/.

This report contains appendices that provide additional statistical and organizationally related information including a largely statistical school overview, copies of any school district comments on the Application for Charter Renewal, and the SUNY Fiscal Dashboard information for the school. If applicable, the appendices also include additional information about the education corporation and its schools including additional evidence on student achievement of other education corporation schools.



RENEWAL RECOMMENDATION

Full-Term Renewal The Institute recommends that the SUNY Trustees approve the Application for Charter Renewal of Explore Charter School and renew Explore Charter Schools of Brooklyn’s authority to operate the school for a period of five years with authority to provide instruction to students in Kindergarten – 8th grade in such configuration as set forth in its Application for Charter Renewal, with a projected total enrollment of 540 students.



To earn a **Subsequent Full-Term Renewal**, a school must demonstrate that it has met or come close to meeting its academic Accountability Plan goals.³

REQUIRED FINDINGS

In addition to making a recommendation based on a determination of whether the school has met the SUNY Trustees’ specific renewal criteria, the Institute makes the following findings required by the Act:

- 1:** the school, as described in the Application for Charter Renewal, meets the requirements of the Act and all other applicable laws, rules, and regulations;
- 2:** the education corporation can demonstrate the ability to operate the school in an educationally and fiscally sound manner in the next charter term; and,
- 3:** given the programs it will offer, its structure and its purpose, approving the school to operate for another five years is likely to improve student learning and achievement and materially further the purposes of the Act.⁴

ENROLLMENT AND RETENTION TARGETS

Enrollment and retention targets apply to all open and operating charter schools. Explore Charter School (“Explore”) received a short-term renewal from the SUNY Trustees in January 2015, and was given targets at that time. Charter schools are required to make good faith efforts to meet enrollment and retention targets for students with disabilities, English language learners (“ELLs”), and students who are eligible applicants for the federal Free and Reduced Price Lunch (“FRPL”) program. As required by Education Law § 2851(4)(e), a school must include in its renewal application information regarding the efforts it will put in place to meet or exceed SUNY’s enrollment and retention targets for students with disabilities, ELLs, and FRPL eligible students.

3. SUNY Renewal Policies
(p. 14).

4. See New York Education
Law § 2852(2).

Explore meets all retention targets and its ELL enrollment target and is just under the target for enrolling students with disabilities. The school recognizes the need to enroll more economically disadvantaged students in order to meet its enrollment target for this subgroup. Explore Schools, Inc. (“Explore Schools” or the “network”), Explore Charter Schools of Brooklyn’s (“Explore Brooklyn’s”) charter management organization (“CMO”), works closely with the school’s operations team to recruit students using the following practices:

- hosting informational open house sessions for prospective families that highlight the school’s program and vision;
- incorporating a set aside of 15% of incoming Kindergarten seats for ELLs;
- translating all promotional materials into languages other than English;
- mailing informational materials to residences within Explore’s zip code;
- engaging families in the recruitment process as spokespeople for the school and recruiters through Explore’s parent referral campaign; and,
- canvassing at local area businesses, pre-Kindergarten programs, and community organizations.

For additional information on the school’s enrollment and retention target progress, see Appendix A.

CONSIDERATION OF SCHOOL DISTRICT COMMENTS

In accordance with the Act, the Institute notified the district in which the charter school is located regarding the school’s Application for Charter Renewal. The full text of any written comments received from the district appears in Appendix C, which also includes a summary of any public comments.

As of the date of this report, the Institute has not received district comments in response to the renewal application. A summary of public comments submitted to the Institute appears in Appendix C.

SCHOOL BACKGROUND AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXPLORE CHARTER SCHOOL

BACKGROUND

The New York City Schools Chancellor (“NYC Chancellor”) approved the original charter for Explore on June 12, 2001. Effective July 1, 2015, the SUNY Trustees granted approval for Explore to merge into SUNY authorized Explore Excel Charter School (“Explore Excel”) together with the following SUNY authorized schools: Explore Exceed Charter School; Explore Envision Charter School; and, Explore Enrich Charter School, and Explore Empower Charter School, authorized by the NYC Chancellor, to create the education corporation Explore Brooklyn. The school opened its doors in the fall of 2002, initially serving students in Kindergarten – 3rd grade. The school is authorized to serve 540 students in Kindergarten – 8th grade during the 2018-19 school year. If renewed, Explore will continue to serve students in Kindergarten – 8th grade, with a projected total enrollment of 540 students.

The current charter term expires on July 31, 2019. A subsequent charter term would enable the school to operate through July 31, 2024. The school is co-located in a New York City Department of Education (“NYCDOE”) building at 655 Parkside Avenue, Brooklyn, NY in New York City Community School District (“CSD”) 17. The building also houses Parkside Preparatory Academy, a district middle school and P.S. K141, a district school serving Kindergarten – 12th grade.

Explore’s mission states:



Explore’s mission is to provide students with the academic skills and critical thinking abilities they need to succeed in a college preparatory high school.

All schools within the education corporation, including Explore, operate under the management of Explore Schools, a New York not-for-profit charter management organization based in New York City. The network provides the schools with academic, operational, and back office assistance. Schools utilize the network’s curricular and assessment materials, all of which are purchased or designed by network curriculum teams. The network is also responsible for managing and evaluating the performance of each school and school leader.

Explore is one of six schools within a merged education corporation. Two schools, Explore Enrich Charter School and Explore Envision Charter School, are not open and, by academic performance conditions within the charter, are not able to open until the SUNY Trustees determine the education corporation has met such conditions.

SCHOOL BACKGROUND AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Explore is an academic success having met or come close to meeting its Accountability Plan goals in 2017-18 dramatically improving its academic performance from the start of the charter term. Explore demonstrates success in the following manner:

- In 2017-18, the school exceeded the target for all of the district comparison measures included in its English language arts (“ELA”), mathematics, and science Accountability Plan goals. Explore outperformed the district by one percentage point in ELA and 11 percentage points in mathematics.
- While the 2017-18 New York State exam results cannot be directly compared to the previous year’s results, Explore made greater achievement gains than its comparison district and dramatically improved its statewide ranking by 20 percentile points outperforming about half of schools statewide. In ELA, Explore increased its absolute proficiency rate by 15 percentage points, six points greater than the district’s nine point change. In mathematics, while the district increased its proficiency rate by eight points, Explore increased its performance by 21 points. Importantly, the school increased its statewide percentile rank by 20 percentile points in ELA and 28 percentile points in mathematics. From 2016-17 to 2017-18, the school more than doubled the number of schools it performed above in mathematics.
- Explore outperformed its co-located middle school in 2017-18, the only co-located academic program with 3rd – 8th grade achievement data, in both ELA and mathematics for 6th – 8th grade. Notably, in 2017-18, 57% of Explore’s 6th – 8th grade students scored at or above proficiency on the state mathematics exam, as compared to 22% of Parkside Preparatory Academy. In ELA, Explore outperformed the co-located school by three percentage points in 2017-18.
- The school’s ELLs demonstrated strong comparative and growth performance in 2017-18. Explore’s ELLs posted a 14% proficiency rate in ELA and 43% proficiency rate in mathematics, surpassing the district ELLs by two and 29 points, respectively. The school’s ELLs posted mean growth percentiles of 76 in ELA and 65 in mathematics. This level of growth indicates that Explore’s ELLs are gaining ground in comparison to all students with similar scale scores from the previous year.
- The school’s students with disabilities also demonstrated commendable growth in 2017-18. That year, those students posted a mean growth percentile of 59 in ELA and 67 in mathematics, demonstrating above average growth compared to similar students statewide.

Over the charter term, the network worked closely with Explore to revamp its curriculum and leadership structures to demonstrate improved student achievement results. Through a well researched process, the network established a new curricular framework for both ELA and mathematics, which has demonstrated improved student achievement results over the current charter term. Additionally, the network and school restructured the leadership team to include a principal for the elementary level and a principal for the middle school level to better target support and development of teachers at each level.

While the Institute observed noticeable improvements in the school's performance and academic program, network and school leaders recognize a need to continue focusing efforts to improve the school's academic program specifically in areas of instruction and at-risk student programs. To do so, the network is enhancing its supports for Explore and the three other open schools to ensure that the current programs continue to improve to raise student achievement results.

Based on the Institute's review of the school's performance as posted over the charter term; a review of the Application for Charter Renewal submitted by the school; a review of academic, organizational, governance and financial documentation; and a renewal visit to the school, the Institute finds that the school meets the required criteria for charter renewal.

The Institute recommends that the SUNY Trustees grant Explore a Subsequent Full-Term Renewal of five years.

NOTEWORTHY

In alignment with its mission, Explore devotes significant resources to supporting students and families through the high school application process. School staff work with students to develop a list of prospective high school programs that are rigorous, committed to college preparation, and meet students extracurricular and academic preferences. In 2017-18, 87% of Explore 8th graders received an offer from one of their top three high school choices.

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ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE



IS THE SCHOOL AN ACADEMIC SUCCESS?

Having met or come close to meeting all key academic Accountability Plan goals in its subsequent charter term, Explore is an academic success. The school's curricular program led to improvements with students' mathematics achievement. Now in its second full year, the instructional leadership has developed consistent systems to support the school.

At the beginning of the Accountability Period,⁵ the school developed and adopted an Accountability Plan that set academic goals in the key subjects of ELA and mathematics. For each goal in the Accountability Plan, specific outcome measures define the level of performance necessary to meet that goal. The Institute examines results for five required Accountability Plan measures to determine ELA and mathematics goal attainment. Because the Act requires charters be held "accountable for meeting measurable student achievement results"⁶ and states the educational programs at a charter school must "meet or exceed the student performance standards adopted by the board of regents"⁷ for other public schools, SUNY's required accountability measures rest on performance as measured by statewide assessments. Historically, SUNY's required measures include measures that present schools':

5. Because the SUNY Trustees make a renewal decision before student achievement results for the final year of a charter term become available, the Accountability Period ends with the school year prior to the final year of the charter term. For a school in a subsequent charter term, the Accountability Period covers the final year of the previous charter term and ends with the school year prior to the final year of the current charter term. In this renewal report, the Institute uses "charter term" and "Accountability Period" interchangeably.

6. Education Law § 2850(2)(f).

7. Education Law § 2854(1)(d).

ABSOLUTE PERFORMANCE, I.E., WHAT PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS SCORE AT A CERTAIN PROFICIENCY ON STATE EXAMS?

COMPARATIVE PERFORMANCE, I.E., HOW DID THE SCHOOL DO AS COMPARED TO SCHOOLS IN THE DISTRICT AND SCHOOLS THAT SERVE SIMILAR POPULATIONS OF ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS?

GROWTH PERFORMANCE, I.E., HOW MUCH DID THE SCHOOL GROW STUDENT PERFORMANCE AS COMPARED TO THE GROWTH OF SIMILARLY SITUATED STUDENTS?

Every SUNY authorized charter school has the opportunity to propose additional measures of success when crafting its Accountability Plan. Explore did not propose any additional measures of success in the Accountability Plan it adopted.

The Institute analyzes every measure included in the school's Accountability Plan to determine its level of academic success including the extent to which the school has established and maintained a record of high performance, and established progress toward meeting its academic Accountability Plan goals throughout the initial charter term. Since 2009, the Institute has examined but consistently de-emphasized the two absolute measures under each goal in elementary and middle schools' Accountability Plans because of changes to

the state's assessment system. The analysis of elementary and middle school performance continues to focus primarily on the two comparative measures and the growth measure while also considering the two required absolute measures and any additional evidence the school presents using additional measures identified in its Accountability Plan. The Institute identifies the required measures (absolute proficiency, absolute measure of interim progress attainment, comparison to local district, comparison to demographically similar schools, student growth, and high school graduation and college going rates, as applicable) in the Performance Summaries appearing in Appendix B.

The Institute analyzes all measures under the school's ELA and mathematics goals (and high school graduation and college preparation goals for schools enrolling students in high school grades) while emphasizing the school's comparative performance and growth to determine goal attainment. The Institute calculates a comparative effect size to measure the performance of Explore relative to all public schools statewide that serve the same grade levels and that enroll similar concentrations of economically disadvantaged students. It is important to note that this measure is a comparison measure, and, therefore, any changes in New York's assessment system do not compromise its validity or reliability. Further, the school's performance on the measure is not relative to the test, but relative to the strength of Explore's demonstrated student learning compared to other schools' demonstrated student learning. Notwithstanding the validity of the measures within a given school year, it is important to recognize changes in the administration of the state exams and cautiously interpret year over year trends in achievement scores.

The Institute uses the state's growth percentile analysis as a measure of Explore's comparative year-to-year growth in student performance on the state's ELA and mathematics exams. The measure compares a school's growth in assessment scores to the growth in assessment scores of the subset of students throughout the state who performed identically on previous years' assessments. According to this measure, median growth statewide is at the 50th percentile. This means that to signal the school's ability to help students make one year's worth of growth in one year's time the expected percentile performance is 50. To signal a school is increasing students' performance above their peers (students statewide who scored previously at the same level), the school must post a percentile performance that exceeds 50.

The Accountability Plan also includes a science goal and a goal for performance under the former the No Child Left Behind ("NCLB"), accountability system, which will be replaced by Every Student Succeeds Act ("ESSA") goals in the future.

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HAS THE SCHOOL MET OR COME CLOSE TO MEETING ITS ACADEMIC ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN GOALS?

Explore improved its academic performance in 2017-18, coming close to meeting its ELA goal and meeting its mathematics and science goals. Although the school did not meet its key academic Accountability Plan goals in ELA or mathematics during the first two years of its three year Accountability Period, Explore improved its overall academic achievement to demonstrate strong results in the final year of its Accountability Period by establishing a more consistent leadership team and more rigorous curriculum. The school met its NCLB goal over the term. The school's leaders work to ensure that the strong growth in 2017-18 will continue in future charter terms.

Explore posted a strong improvement across all of its ELA measures in 2017-18, coming close to meeting the goal in the final year of its three year Accountability Period. From 2015-16 through 2016-17, the school's students enrolled in at least their second year posted proficiency rates slightly below the district. Similarly, the school posted comparative effect sizes below the target of 0.3 in both years, performing lower than expected in comparison to demographically similar schools statewide. In 2015-16 and 2016-17, Explore posted mean growth percentiles one and five points below the target of 50, respectively. In 2017-18, the school came close to meeting its ELA goal when 43% of its students enrolled in at least their second year scored at or above proficiency. After having performed slightly below the district in the prior two years, the school increased its performance by 15 percentage points and outperformed the district by one point. Explore also improved its achievement on its comparative effect size measure, coming close to the target of 0.3 and performing higher than expected in comparison to schools across the state enrolling similar percentages of economically disadvantaged students. Concomitant with its improvement in absolute proficiency and effect size, the school posted strong growth in 2017-18: the school's mean growth percentile exceeded the target by eight points.

Explore posted a similar record of achievement in mathematics over its three year Accountability Period and met its mathematics goal in the final year of the Accountability Period. After not meeting the goal in 2015-16 and 2016-17, the school posted exceptional improvement against all of its measures in 2017-18. In 2015-16, the school outperformed the district by four percentage points when 31% its students enrolled in at least their second year scored at or above proficiency. The school posted an effect size of -0.02, falling below the target of 0.3. The school also did not meet the target under its growth measure when it posted a mean growth percentile of 42. The following year, the school's absolute performance

declined and fell two percentage points below the district. Explore continued to not meet its targeted effect size measure, performing lower than expected compared to schools with similar proportions of economically disadvantaged students. The school also did not meet its growth target for the second year of the Accountability Period. In contrast, Explore demonstrated strong mathematics achievement in 2017-18, surpassing the target for all of its comparative and growth measures. With 45% of its students enrolled in at least their second year scoring at or above proficiency, the school outperformed the district by 11 percentage points. In comparison to schools across the state enrolling similar percentages of economically disadvantaged students, the school performed higher than expected to a meaningful degree. Further, the school posted exceptional mean growth, exceeding the target by 23 percentile points. This level of growth indicates that the school grew the learning of its students at much greater rates than their peers across the state.

In 2015-16, the first year of its Accountability Period, Explore's 4th and 8th grade students enrolled in at least their second year posted a proficiency rate of 63%, meeting the district performance but falling below the absolute target of 75%. The following year, the school continued to underperform the absolute target and fell below the district's proficiency rate by nine percentage points. In 2017-18, the school met its science goal when 79% of students scored at or above proficiency on the state's science exam, exceeding the absolute target by four points and outperforming the district by 12 percentage points.

Explore remained in good standing under the state's accountability system over the charter term.

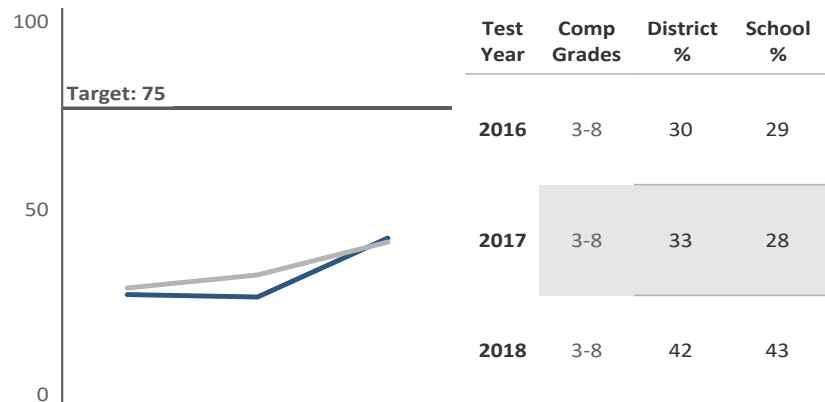
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ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

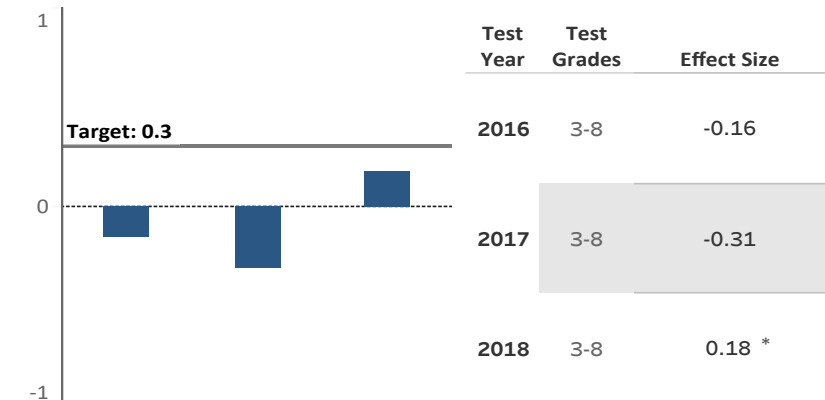
EXPLORE CHARTER SCHOOL

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN GOAL

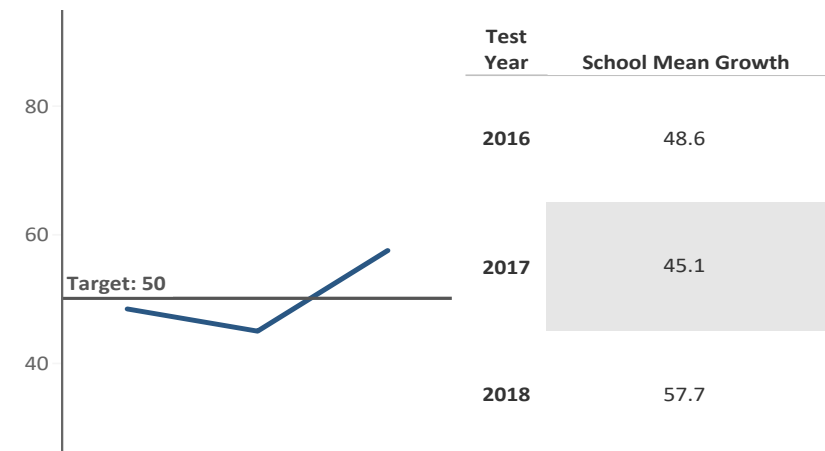
Comparative Measure: District Comparison. Each year, the percentage of students at **the school** in at least their second year performing at or above proficiency in ELA will be greater than that of students in the same tested grades in **the district**.



Comparative Measure: Effect Size. Each year, the school will exceed its predicted level of performance by an effect size of 0.3 or above in **ELA** according to a regression analysis controlling for economically disadvantaged students among all public schools in New York State.



Comparative Growth Measure: Mean Growth Percentile. Each year, the school's unadjusted mean growth percentile for all students in grades 4-8 will be above the state's unadjusted median growth percentile in **ELA**.



*This draft effect size is based on the preliminary demographic data available for 2017-18.

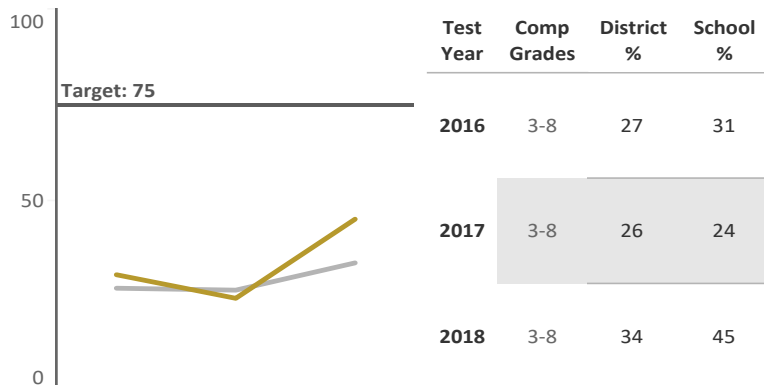
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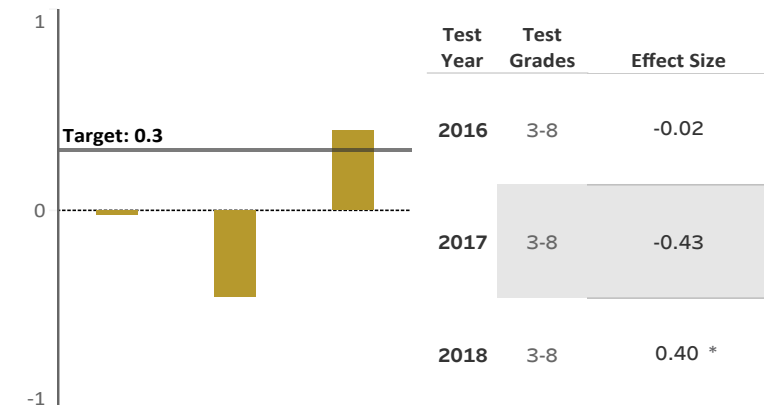
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MATHEMATICS ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN GOAL

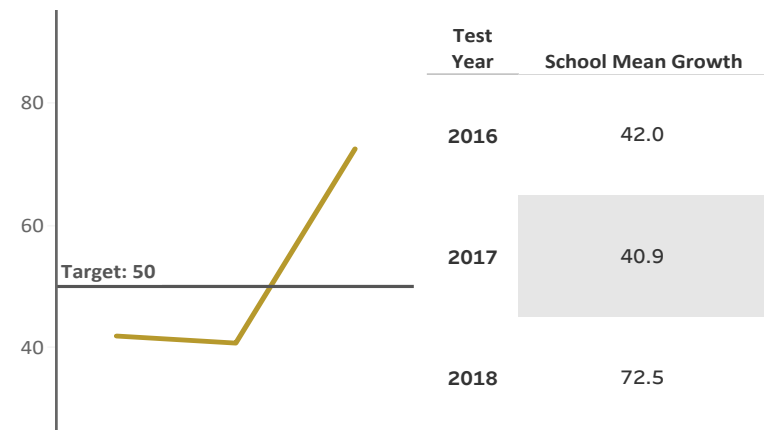
Comparative Measure: District Comparison. Each year, the percentage of students at **the school** in at least their second year performing at or above proficiency in mathematics will be greater than that of students in the same tested grades in **the district**.



Comparative Measure: Effect Size. Each year, the school will exceed its predicted level of performance by an effect size of 0.3 or above in **Mathematics** according to a regression analysis controlling for economically disadvantaged students among all public schools in New York State.



Comparative Growth Measure: Mean Growth Percentile. Each year, the school's unadjusted mean growth percentile for all students in grades 4-8 will be above the state's unadjusted median growth percentile in **Mathematics**.



*This draft effect size is based on the preliminary demographic data available for 2017-18.

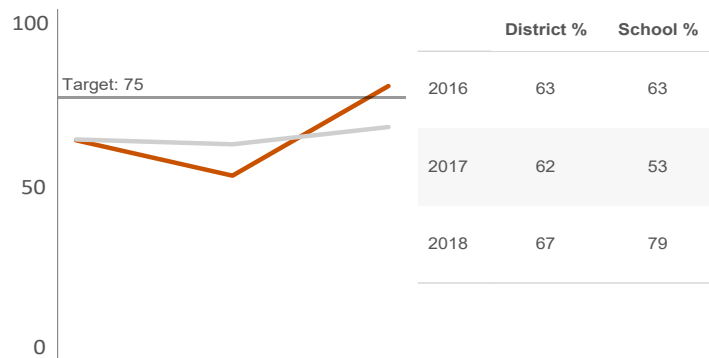
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ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

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SCIENCE ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN GOAL

Science: Comparative Measure. Each year, the percentage of students at the school in at least their second year performing at or above proficiency in **science** will exceed that of students in the same tested grades in the **district**.



SPECIAL POPULATIONS PERFORMANCE

	2016	2017	2018
Enrollment Receiving Mandated Academic Services	77	76	79
Tested on State Exam	44	43	46
School Percent Proficient on ELA Exam	6.8	7.0	15.2
District Percent Proficient	8.2	11.3	17.2
	2016	2017	2018
ELL Enrollment	26	21	35
Tested on NYSESLAT Exam	24	17	35
School Percent 'Commanding' or Making Progress on NYSESLAT	25.0	23.5	37.1

The academic outcome data about the performance of students receiving special education services and ELLs above is not tied to separate goals in the school's formal Accountability Plan.

The NYSESLAT, the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test, is a standardized state exam.

"Making Progress" is defined as moving up at least one level of proficiency. Student scores fall into five categories/proficiency levels: Entering; Emerging; Transitioning; Expanding; and, Commanding.

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DOES THE SCHOOL HAVE AN ASSESSMENT SYSTEM THAT IMPROVES INSTRUCTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS AND STUDENT LEARNING?

Continuing the improvements noted from the Institute's spring 2018 visit, Explore's assessment system is valid and reliable, and supports instructional effectiveness and student learning. Leaders use assessment outcomes to make data driven decisions about professional development and teacher evaluations. The school continues to refine its practices for analyzing data to adjust instruction.

- Explore effectively administers valid and reliable standards aligned assessments to monitor student progress. Each term, the school administers standards aligned network interim assessments in ELA and mathematics. Teachers assess student reading levels using Fountas & Pinnell ("F&P") Benchmark Assessment System three times per year, as well as the Core Knowledge Language Arts ("CKLA") assessment for Kindergarten – 2nd grade for ELA. The school assesses ELA skills using mid- and end-of-unit assessments for the Expeditionary Learning ("EL") curriculum. In writing, the school uses the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project ("TCRWP") units of study tool and weekly on-demand in class assessments. The school administers unit assessments and weekly quizzes in mathematics from the Achievement First Navigator ("AF Navigator") open source curriculum. For social studies and science, teachers develop their own unit assessments.
- In response to feedback from the Institute's spring 2018 visit, the school now has a valid and reliable process for scoring and analyzing assessments, and implements it with fidelity. Across content areas, school leaders and coaches regularly lead professional learning communities ("PLCs") to norm the scoring process against rubrics with teachers. In writing, teams examine student exemplars together against a rubric to ensure consistency in grading methods. Teachers score sample writing pieces individually and review them extensively with a coach before scoring student assessments. Teachers grade EL and Investigations unit assessments independently.
- Explore makes assessment data immediately accessible to teachers and school leaders using Illuminate, an online data management system. Teachers input weekly quiz data for reading and mathematics into the system, which creates automated data reports for analysis. As compared to the Institute's spring 2018 visit, the school has noticeably improved teachers' access and use of data as evidenced by teachers' thoughtful planning and analysis of student achievement data. For example, teams conduct grade level data analysis protocols in PLCs immediately after key assessments. Additionally, the network team sends weekly data reports for ELA and mathematics assessments, and teachers outline key takeaways to inform instructional planning.

- This year, the school is initiating new procedures for teachers to analyze and use assessment data to inform instruction. Previously, the school used data to determine high level trends and determine reteach skills. For this school year, leaders utilize the PLCs for teachers to analyze assessment results and create reteach action plans. Teachers also use this data to inform Response to Intervention (“RTI”) goals. Teachers in co-taught classrooms work together to target specific students during lessons based on a review of the student data. At the school level, leaders closely monitor the action plans, ensure plans align to student data, and follow up with teachers to monitor students’ improvement.
- Explore leaders use assessment results to evaluate teacher effectiveness and plan professional development sessions and coaching. Network and school leaders have placed an increased focus on referring to student data during ongoing conversations and in the end of year formal evaluation. Throughout the year, teachers and coaches use student performance data to drive end of term reflection conversations at the end of each coaching cycle. Teachers work with leaders at the beginning of each year to set specific professional development goals, and these goals closely relate to the school’s term goals and targeted areas of professional growth for each teacher. During check in meetings, leaders review teachers’ progress toward meeting these goals and adjust as necessary when teachers demonstrate mastery. Instructional leaders create professional development sessions based on trends identified in these data.
- The school communicates with parents about student progress regularly. Families receive report cards five times each school year and attend parent teacher conferences twice annually. Parents have login access to an online system through which they can view grades and student progress, as well as gain other pertinent updates. The majority of parents access this system regularly. Teachers maintain constant informal communication with parents about their child’s academic progress, and the school has made a noted attempt to increase the focus placed on academics versus disproportionately focusing on behavior.

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DOES THE SCHOOL'S CURRICULUM SUPPORT TEACHERS IN THEIR INSTRUCTIONAL PLANNING?

Explore's curriculum continues to evolve to support teachers in their instructional planning. Leaders provide teachers with scripted curricula or support them to create materials internally where needed. Teachers receive intensive support to internalize these materials using a network-wide protocol and adapt individual lesson plans to meet the needs of students. Though the network is continuing to build its capacity in this area, network and school leaders recognize specific areas to improve the overall curricular program.

- The school uses the network's curricular framework, which is structured with student performance expectations aligned to state standards. For ELA instruction, the school uses CKLA in Kindergarten – 2nd grade and EL in Kindergarten – 8th grade. Teachers supplement the ELA curriculum with small group Instruction for guided reading and close reading using materials from the Lavinia Group, an external consulting group. The school uses TCRWP for its writing curriculum, and teachers create the content for social studies and science based on state standards with the use of History Alive! as a supplement in social studies. For mathematics instruction, the school uses the Investigations program in Kindergarten – 2nd grade with mathematics stories from AF Navigator's open source curriculum. In 3rd – 8th grade, the mathematics curriculum is AF Navigator. While teachers are clear on the curricular programs utilized, the network has not fully aligned the programs to define a fully cohesive curricular program. For example, the network introduced a new component to mathematics, but did not fully integrate the story problem block with the mathematics content block.
- The school has developed tools that bridge the curricular framework to daily lesson plans. The network provides teachers with curricular maps in each content area. The EL and AF Navigator mathematics curricula are highly scripted, requiring minimal planning so that teachers can focus on internalizing the material. Explore leaders work with teachers during PLCs and one on one coaching times to ensure that teachers are fully aware of content expectations. Now in its beginning stages, this practice should allow teachers to pre-plan misconceptions and have an immediate remedy for when students do not understand content.
- Across content areas, Explore teachers are very clear about what to teach and when, and teachers are clear about which instructional leaders to approach for more support when needed. Instructional leaders guide teachers to create pacing calendars during pre-service staff orientation in the summer, and coaches are readily available to provide intensive support to teachers who need additional coaching throughout the school year. In grade level PLCs, grade teams examine the scope and sequence for their given content areas and adjust the pacing calendar based on takeaways from regular data step backs where they examine and analyze student performance.

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- The network works with Explore on the process for selecting, developing, and reviewing curricular materials. During professional development days, the network pulls together both grade and content level teachers from each school to plan units and unpack specific lesson plans to support high quality lesson planning. Network curriculum team members work closely with each group, collect feedback from teachers, and revise the curricular program as necessary. Recognizing a need to include more conceptual understanding in the mathematics framework, the network introduced a story problems block to address the issue and is working with leaders and teachers to better integrate the block into the overall curricular program.
- Explore uses a structured process to support teachers to plan purposeful and focused lessons. During PLCs, teachers engage in an intellectual preparation process (“IPP”) to ensure they are prepared and can anticipate student misconceptions throughout lessons. Through this process, they prepare back pocket questions to probe deeply for student understanding. Academic leads divide lesson plan review by content area and scan lesson plans for completion, but do not yet provide consistent feedback on content in lessons. Lesson plan reviewers share varying levels of detail in feedback and varies from reviewer to reviewer.

IS HIGH QUALITY INSTRUCTION EVIDENT THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL?

This year, Explore leaders prioritized establishing strong classroom cultures at the beginning of the school year to ensure that teachers establish classroom environments with a consistent focus on academic achievement. With the network initiative to utilize strong objectives and clear criteria for success in each lesson, teachers deliver purposeful lessons across the school. As shown in the chart below, during the renewal visit, Institute team members conducted 33 observations following a defined protocol used in all renewal visits.

NUMBER OF CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

		GRADE									
		K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
CONTENT AREA	ELA	2	2		2	2	1	2	1	2	14
	Math		2	2	2	2	3	1	2	2	16
	Science					1				2	3
	Total	2	4	2	4	5	4	3	3	6	33

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- Teachers deliver purposeful lessons with clear objectives aligned to the school's curricula (30 out of 33 lessons). Utilizing feedback from the Institute's spring 2018 visit, leaders spent time during summer professional development to work with teachers on establishing strong learning objectives with accompanying criteria for success for each lesson. Teachers present objectives at the beginning of lessons and utilize checklists and other mechanisms for students to review their work against the criteria for success at the end of each lesson. In classrooms with two teachers, both teachers are clear on roles and responsibilities for each lesson and often effectively utilize co-teaching models that allow for a lower student to teacher ratio and more targeted instructional strategies.
- Almost half of Explore teachers regularly use techniques to check for student understanding (15 out of 33 lessons). Teachers who effectively used checks for understanding circulate around the classroom and check in with individual students and provide meaningful feedback that challenges students to think about their work and correct misconceptions. Additionally, these teachers use these moments as teaching moments for the entire class by sharing misconceptions with the rest of the class. In the other half of classrooms observed, teachers did not effectively collect information on student learning to make in the moment changes. In some cases, teachers did not hold all students accountable for completing their work.
- Though only about a third of teachers observed include opportunities in lessons to challenge students with questions and activities that develop higher order thinking skills (9 out of 33 lessons), leaders recognize a need to focus on this area in professional development sessions. Teachers who effectively infused higher order thinking activities into lessons utilized multiple opportunities for students to turn and talk with partners and to discuss parts of the lessons. However, in a majority of classrooms observed, teachers do not consistently provide opportunities for students to demonstrate problem solving skills. Leaders recognize this as an area for improvement and plan to incorporate best practices during future professional development sessions.
- Most Explore teachers have effective classroom management techniques and routines that create a consistent focus on academic achievement (23 out of 33 lessons). Teachers effectively use timers to demonstrate urgency during lessons and keep lessons on pace. In most classrooms, teachers engage students with interesting work and other techniques that allow students to sustain interest in lesson topics. Teachers utilize a variety of strategies to add a joy factor into transitions and lessons.

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DOES THE SCHOOL HAVE STRONG INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP?

As the primary drivers of instructional leadership at Explore, network staff members are working to build school leaders' capacity to guide and support teacher effectiveness and student learning in the school. Network leaders are now initiating more formal processes for leaders to create schoolwide priorities. However, current priorities are limited in their scope to ensure high quality student work.

- Network leaders bring a strong sense of urgency to Explore, which supports leaders to establish an environment of high expectations for teacher performance. While leaders set clear priorities for each term that they consistently share and revisit with teachers, the quality and scope of the first term priorities are limited to such actions as work completion. Leaders recognize a need to create more rigorous priorities earlier in the year to ensure that teachers include more opportunities to target and address students' misconceptions and learning needs.
- Explore's leadership structure supports the development of the teaching staff. The elementary and middle school levels each have a principal who drives the vision of each school level. In addition to each principal providing consistent coaching, the leadership teams at each level manage and coach teachers. Leadership teams consist of two academic directors and support services coordinator at the elementary level and an academic director, academic coordinator, and support services manager at the middle school level. The network is focusing on developing training programs for all levels of leaders, as it recognizes leadership development as a key lever for improvement across the education corporation. Starting this year, each leader has a coach and supervisor to support leaders in increasing their capacity to improve teachers' developmental needs.
- School leaders establish clear protocols to improve teachers' instructional effectiveness. Leaders provide individualized coaching and mentoring to teachers and frequently observe classrooms and provide written and verbal feedback. Leaders work with teachers to set professional development goals. During weekly check in meetings, teachers review the goals with leaders to discuss progress toward meeting goals.
- Explore leaders provide opportunities and guidance for teachers to plan teaching and learning collaboratively. Teachers participate in weekly PLCs and grade level team meetings to unpack the curricular scope and sequence and identify learning targets and criteria for success for each lesson. Additionally, teachers use time at collaboration meetings to analyze student performance data and student work samples to determine reteach topics. A member of the leadership team supports at each meeting and drives the discussion to ensure teachers effectively analyze student data and determine clear action steps for how to improve student learning.

- Instructional leaders implement a professional development program to develop teachers pedagogical skills. Explore offers professional development on site as well as network-wide to allow teachers to work collaboratively with teachers in the same grade level or content area across multiple schools. In response to the Institute's spring 2018 visit, leaders identified school culture and teachers' management skills as an area to improve through professional development strategies. The training has been effective as the school environment improved in this area since the previous spring 2018 visit. Given the improvements to the school's culture, leaders recognize a need to shift topics to more content and pedagogy based areas to continue to improve the school's academic performance.
- Explore leaders regularly conduct teacher evaluations that accurately identify teachers' strengths and weaknesses. At the beginning of the year, leaders work with each teacher to set goals based on the formal evaluation rubric. Through weekly meetings, leaders revisit these goals with teachers to monitor progress and suggest improvements. At the end of each term, leaders provide a summative review of progress toward the professional goals and performance in the classrooms to teachers. Leaders utilize the end of term reviews to conduct a comprehensive end of year formal evaluation providing teachers with strengths and areas to improve. Through the evaluation system, leaders hold teachers accountable for quality instruction and student achievement.

DOES THE SCHOOL MEET THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF AT-RISK STUDENTS?

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In response to feedback from the Institute's spring 2018 visit, Explore has improved some programs to meet the needs of at-risk students. With support from network level at-risk program staff members, the school now has a RTI program that is in its beginning stages to accurately identify students struggling academically. Due to an unexpected departure of the school's ELL teacher at the beginning of the year, the school acted with urgency to identify a new ELL coordinator to provide services to ELL students. However, services had not yet started at the time of the Institute's visit.

- Explore has clear procedures for identifying at-risk students. Leaders and teachers utilize F&P, ELA, and mathematics interim assessments from the year before to identify students struggling academically to be a part of the school's RTI process. Teachers review data at the beginning of the year to determine student groups for small group instruction ("SGI") and identify the lagging skills each group will target. Throughout the year, teachers discuss student data in weekly grade level RTI meetings. If students do not make progress

after receiving interventions at the tier 3 level, then teachers refer students to the support services coordinator or manager for a potential referral to the district committee on special education (“CSE”) for evaluation for special education services. For ELLs, the school uses the Home Language Identification Survey to identify families that speak languages other than English, then, for eligible students, administers the New York State English Identification Test for English Language Learners (“NYSITELL”).

- Explore changed its intervention programs to ensure the programs better meet the needs of at-risk students than in previous school years. The network hired a director of special populations to oversee these changes and ensure the school delivers the programs with fidelity. Students struggling academically receive daily SGI in ELA and mathematics. Depending on the intensity of the required intervention, students will receive SGI from either a classroom teacher or learning specialist. Given the school’s first term goal of getting students to engage and complete work, the school missed opportunities during the first few weeks of school to support learners who struggle in accurately completing classwork. For students with Individualized Education Programs (“IEPs”), Explore provides mandated services such as special education teacher support services (“SETSS”), integrated co-teaching (“ICT”), and related services.
- The school and network have a clearly defined ELL program to meet the needs of ELLs including an ELL teacher to provide targeted language proficiency support to ELL students in a small group setting. For Kindergarten – 2nd grade, the school uses resources from the CKLA curricular program to provide English language acquisition skills, and in 3rd – 8th grade, the school makes modifications to the close reading program using the sheltered instruction observation protocol (“SIOP”). Due to teacher turnover, at the time of the renewal visit, the ELL teacher was finishing administering the NYSITELL and creating ELL snapshots for classroom teachers and planned to provide ELL services by the end of October.
- Explore has a clear system for monitoring students’ progress toward meeting IEP goals, English language proficiency, and school based goals for students struggling academically. Special education teachers are responsible for tracking students with disabilities’ progress toward meeting IEP goals and communicate this progress to general education teachers through the use of quarterly reports. For students struggling academically, teachers use an RTI binder to monitor and track the progress of students in the RTI process on a weekly basis. In this binder, teachers have a record of students’ goals, interventions attempting and attempted, and work products to highlight progress during RTI meetings. The school administers the World Class Instructional Design and Assessment (“WIDA”), an assessment to monitor English language proficiency, to ELLs three times per year and uses the results to track students’ progress toward English language proficiency goals in writing, reading, speaking, and listening.

- Teachers are aware of students' at-risk status and goals. At-risk program providers share IEP and ELL snapshots with general education teachers. General education teachers also receive RTI binders. Special education providers and ELL teachers monitor students' progress, and the school is working to establish a system so that information is shared between the at-risk program and general education teachers in a systematic way so that general education teachers are consistently aware of at-risk student progress.
- The school provides effective training and professional development to at-risk program teachers including learning specialists and ELL teachers. The director of special populations delivers professional development sessions to school based at-risk program staff members in areas including identifying at-risk students and providing effective differentiation strategies. The director of special populations works with principals to ensure that similar training sessions are provided to general education teachers to develop and improve teachers' differentiation strategies.
- Explore has put structures in place to support coordination between at-risk program providers and general education teachers. At-risk program and general education teachers meet on a weekly basis to discuss students' progress during RTI meetings and PLCs. The school works to include structured time for teachers to discuss ELLs and students with disabilities, as these conversations occur on an ad hoc basis.

ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE



IS THE SCHOOL AN EFFECTIVE, VIABLE ORGANIZATION?

Explore is an effective, viable organization. The network and school based operations teams support the non academic functions of the school so that principals focus solely on developing and improving the academic program. The board regularly reviews information from the school to hold the network and school leaders accountable for improving student achievement results.

IS THE SCHOOL FAITHFUL TO ITS MISSION AND DOES IT IMPLEMENT THE KEY DESIGN ELEMENTS INCLUDED IN ITS CHARTER?

Explore is faithful to its mission and key design elements. These can be found in the School Background section at the beginning of the report and Appendix A, respectively. Teachers and leaders are focused on developing skills within students to ensure success at college preparatory high schools. Families, students, teachers, and leaders share a strong sense of community and pride within Explore.

ARE PARENTS/GUARDIANS AND STUDENTS SATISFIED WITH THE SCHOOL?

To report on parent satisfaction with the school's program, the Institute used survey data, information gathered from a focus group of parents representing a cross section of students, and data regarding persistence in enrollment.

Parent Survey Data. The Institute compiled data from the NYCDOE's 2017-18 NYC School Survey. NYCDOE distributes the survey every year to compile data about school culture, instruction, and systems for improvement. In 2017-18, 40% of families who received the survey responded. The majority of survey responses (94%) indicate high satisfaction with the school. However, given the low response rate, the survey results may not be useful in framing the results as representative of the entire school community.

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Parent Focus Group. The Institute asks all schools facing renewal to convene a representative set of parents for a focus group discussion. A representative set includes parents of students in attendance at the school for multiple years, parents of students new to the school, parents of students receiving general education services, parents of students with special needs, and parents of ELLs. The 14 parents in attendance at the focus group indicated strong satisfaction with Explore’s academic program. Parents expressed a high level of praise and appreciation for the efforts of the middle school guidance counselor, who supports families in the high school application process.

Persistence in Enrollment. An additional indicator of parent satisfaction is persistence in enrollment. In 2017-18, 95% of Explore students returned from the previous year. Student persistence data from previous years of the charter term is available in Appendix A.

The Institute derived the statistical information on persistence in enrollment from its database. No comparative data from the NYCDOE or the New York State Education Department (“NYSED”) is available to the Institute to provide either district or statewide context.

DOES THE SCHOOL’S ORGANIZATION WORK EFFECTIVELY TO DELIVER THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM?

Explore’s organizational structure, with support from the network, has made improvements over the past year to better deliver the educational program. The new structures in place at the network allow network and school leaders to implement the necessary systems and processes to drive teaching and learning across the school.

- Explore establishes an administrative structure that allows the school to carry out its academic program. After a careful review of schoolwide and network-wide data, the network made significant changes to the network’s organizational structure in 2017-18 to better support school leaders. The network added the senior director of special populations, operations team members, and a talent department to ensure that principals receive more support in these areas that allow them to focus on the academic program. The additional staff members at the network level have allowed network leaders to provide additional support and capacity building for instructional leaders at all levels. Each instructional leader has a coach and manager to provide guidance and support. Leveraging all schools in the network, secondary leaders participate in development opportunities that bring all secondary leaders across the network together for collaboration meetings on how to best fulfill their roles.

- Explore's organizational structure establishes distinct lines of accountability with clearly defined roles and responsibilities. Both the elementary and middle school levels have operations and instructional leadership teams that make sure that the daily management of the school is carefully calibrated to drive and bolster curriculum and instruction across the school. At the school level, teachers are clear about who to go to for what. The board has used the impending departure of the network's CEO to restructure that role into two key positions: the superintendent and the executive director. In the midst of the transition during the renewal visit, school leaders and network staff members are clear about the change in leadership structure and recognize a clear delineation of duties between the superintendent and executive director, which includes overseeing the academic program of all schools and managing the day to day operational functions, respectively.
- Explore has a clear student discipline system in place that teachers and leaders consistently apply across the school. Teachers routinely utilize the consequences systems and focus energy on positive redirections of minor disruptive behaviors during lessons. Teachers work closely with the deans of students to ensure that students do not miss instructional time, and leaders work closely with families to achieve this goal.
- Explore works diligently to retain high quality teachers and staff members. The newly expanded network talent team works closely with school leaders to ensure the network anticipates possible vacancies and openings. The school recognizes that attracting high quality teachers can be a challenge, and so the talent team is building a robust talent pipeline to build the capacity of the available pool of teachers and leaders through secondary leadership roles or assistant teacher roles.
- Explore allocates the necessary resources to ensure the smooth operation of the academic program. Teachers have access to multiple technology resources to create engaging lessons, and the new curricular resources provide a variety of supportive intervention tools to address the needs of at-risk student populations. Leaders have some flexibility in creating their staffing charts, and so create appropriate positions to ensure teachers have the necessary support to focus on academics. For example, the elementary level allocated a dean of students for both Kindergarten – 2nd grade and for 3rd – 5th grade.
- Explore maintains the necessary enrollment to meet its budgetary needs. The school backfills students in every grade as part of its mission. To ensure the school meets its enrollment targets, the network sets rigorous enrollment targets for the beginning of the year. The school and network have clear procedures in place to monitor and progress toward meeting enrollment and retention targets for subgroups of students. The operations team works closely with network staff members to institute a robust student recruitment process each year. Explore makes good faith efforts to recruit students with disabilities, students eligible for FRPL, and ELLs. The school also has a preference in the lottery for ELLs and translates all materials into languages other than English.

- Explore regularly monitors and evaluates the school's programs and makes adjustments as necessary. Network and school leaders elicit feedback from teachers and families and make adjustments as necessary. Responding to continuous low test scores in mathematics, the network identified a new curricular program to address all key gaps in the school's previous mathematics curricula. The school has worked to address feedback from the Institute's spring 2018 visit including an improvement in the school's culture that has led to better managed classrooms and fewer student send outs and suspensions for the start of the current school year.

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DOES THE BOARD WORK EFFECTIVELY TO ACHIEVE THE SCHOOL'S ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN GOALS?

The Explore Brooklyn board works effectively to achieve Explore's Accountability Plan goals. The board works to hold the network and school accountable for improving student achievement results.

- Explore Brooklyn board members possess the necessary skills with which to govern the school; members have experience in the fields of education, recruitment, finance, business, and law. The board utilizes a clear committee structure to divide responsibilities of finance and academic accountability amongst members of the board. Each committee meets on a termly basis to review relevant information to determine specific follow up from Explore or the network, and then reports out at the full board meeting.
- The board requests and receives information that allows it to provide rigorous oversight of Explore's program and finances. Using the committee structure, board members meet with respective operations or academic staff members from the network in each the finance and accountability committees to review recent data regarding the schools in the network. Through the academic accountability committee, members ensure that the board receives necessary student achievement data to hold the school accountable for improving the academic program and make progress toward meeting Explore's Accountability Plan goals.
- At the start of the 2017-18 school year, the board worked with the network and an external consultant to establish a strategic plan to serve as a mechanism to monitor short and long term goals. The board ensures that each aspect of the strategic plan aligns with the school's mission, and the board developed clear, measurable metrics for each area. The main priority, as identified by the board and through the strategic plan, is to continue to improve the school's student achievement results, with clear goals set for the school and at-risk student subgroups.

- The Explore Brooklyn board works closely with the network board to evaluate and review the effectiveness of network leadership and provides final approval on each principal candidate. The board works to review leader and teacher satisfaction information and adjusts as necessary. For example, for the 2018-19 school year, the board recognized a need to provide teachers with more preparation time during the school day, so it worked with the network to work more time into daily schedules.
- Though the board does not have a formal evaluation process to evaluate its performance, members utilize time during retreats to reflect on their participation, and the board has a clear job description for the roles and responsibilities of a board member. The board reports it is developing the capacity to be more critical of members' participation and contributions to the board. In the midst of transitions at the network level, the board first focused on ensuring it had the right leadership at the network through a rigorous interview process completed together with the network board. With the transition of the founding chief executive officer, the board has confidence in the new network leadership structure and staff members, and it plans to utilize the strategic plan as a method to evaluate the effectiveness of network supports for Explore.
- The Explore Brooklyn board effectively communicates with the school. The board includes a seat for a parent representative as a full board member to ensure families have clear lines of communication to the board. Additionally, the board sets a goal of visiting each school in Explore Charter Schools of Brooklyn at least four times per year.

DOES THE BOARD IMPLEMENT, MAINTAIN, AND ABIDE BY APPROPRIATE POLICIES, SYSTEMS, AND PROCESSES?

The board materially and substantially implements, maintains, and abides by adequate and appropriate policies, systems, and processes to ensure the effective governance and oversight of the school. While the board has always held school leadership and the network accountable for fiscal soundness, the board has increased its understanding of its role in holding them accountable for academic results during this charter term.

- Recently the board worked to complete a strategic plan with an outside consultant to ensure the organization moves forward with clear goals as well as ways to track progress toward those goals.
- The board has been thoughtful as to different initiatives during the current charter term to improve student outcomes.
- Working with the network and its board, the education corporation's board worked to build a revitalized network team charged with executing on the strategic plan moving forward.

- The board works in a successful committee structure leveraging skill sets. Committees also work within the goals of the strategic plan.
- Understanding its own accountability, the board is currently formalizing a board evaluation tool.
- The board has worked to ensure less regrettable staff member attrition through increased oversight and incentives each year.
- With the mission of having a sense of community and family, the board includes a voting parent member to ensure direct access and to allow parents to be part of the decision making.
- The board makes a concerted effort to walk all schools throughout the year to gain firsthand knowledge and provide access to the larger school community.

HAS THE SCHOOL SUBSTANTIALLY COMPLIED WITH APPLICABLE LAWS, RULES AND REGULATIONS, AND PROVISIONS OF ITS CHARTER?

The education corporation substantially complies with applicable laws, rules and regulations, and provisions of its charter with one minor exception.

- **Annual Reports.** While Explore properly submitted its annual reports to the Institute and NYSED, the school has not posted recent annual reports on its website in accordance with the Act. The Institute will follow up with the school to update the website prior to the next charter term.
- **Complaints.** The Institute received no formal complaints regarding the school.
- **Compliance.** The Institute issued no violation letters during the charter term.
- **FERPA and IDEA.** The Institute noted a technical deficiency regarding the sharing of student records and IEP information with teachers not instructing students in violation of Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and the privacy provisions of the Individuals with Disability Education Act. The Institute visit team corrected the school at the time of the renewal visit by providing technical assistance regarding how a school should only share certain student information with teachers with a legitimate educational interest.

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FISCAL PERFORMANCE



IS THE EDUCATION CORPORATION FISCALLY SOUND?

Based on a review of the fiscal evidence collected through the renewal review, Explore Charter Schools of Brooklyn is fiscally sound as is its school, Explore. The SUNY Fiscal Dashboard presents color-coded tables and charts indicating that Explore and the education corporation have demonstrated fiscal soundness over the majority of the charter term.⁸ (The SUNY Fiscal Dashboard for Explore is included in Appendix D and the Fiscal Dashboard for the Explore Charter Schools of Brooklyn merged education corporation is included in Appendix F). The discussion that follows relates mainly to the Explore Charter Schools of Brooklyn education corporation because a school is not a legally distinct fiscal entity.

8. The U.S. Department of Education has established fiscal criteria for certain ratios or information with high – medium – low categories, represented in the table as green – gray – red. The categories generally correspond to levels of fiscal risk, but must be viewed in the context of each education corporation and the general type or category of school.

The network supports Explore in the areas of curriculum, student evaluation, recruiting, training, professional development, financial management and technology under the terms of a management contract that reflects 12% management fee over the charter term. The financial model is intended to ensure that a fully enrolled school is financially sustainable, operating the academic program solely through public funding.

Explore opened in 2002-03 authorized by the NYC Chancellor. Effective July 1, 2015, two charters originally authorized by the NYC Chancellor merged into the SUNY authorized schools to join the existing Explore Excel together with three other SUNY authorized charter schools operated by Explore Schools. For renewal, in addition to analyzing the soundness of the individual charter schools, the Institute analyzed the soundness of the not-for-profit education corporation granted the authority to operate Explore and finds it too has the financial resources to ensure stable operations. The fiscal dashboards reflect the independent entity as fiscally strong prior to the merger and fiscally strong as a merged entity.

DOES THE SCHOOL OPERATE PURSUANT TO A FISCAL PLAN IN WHICH IT CREATES REALISTIC BUDGETS THAT IT MONITORS AND ADJUSTS WHEN APPROPRIATE?

Explore has the financial resources to ensure stable operations. Working with the network, Explore has employed clear budgetary objectives and budget preparation procedures throughout the charter term.

- The budget process involves the network finance team and school leadership positions to develop each school's budget using a model designed to achieve self-sufficiency of unique requirements of any particular program offered without the use of private philanthropy.

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The budgets are based on historical actual revenues and expenses and programmatic changes to ensure that the staff can properly support the proposed enrollment. The strong financial health of the school ensures that any programmatic needs can be met.

- The projected five-year renewal budget reflects anticipated stable revenues and expenses associated with planned enrollment as the school continues to serve Kindergarten – 8th grade.
- Explore operates the elementary and middle school in one NYCDOE co-location site under a lease agreement with NYCDOE for one dollar. The space provided for the elementary and middle school programs has the capacity to support the school for the next charter term.

DOES THE SCHOOL MAINTAIN APPROPRIATE INTERNAL CONTROLS AND PROCEDURES?

Explore has a history of sound fiscal policies, procedures and practices, and maintains appropriate internal controls.

- The network Fiscal Policies and Procedures Manual serves as the guide to all financial internal controls and procedures. The manual undergoes ongoing reviews and updates.
- The most recent Explore Brooklyn audit report completed had no material findings or deficiencies.

DOES THE SCHOOL COMPLY WITH FINANCIAL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS?

Explore and the education corporation have complied with financial reporting requirements.

- The Institute and NYSED have received the required financial reports on time, complete and follow generally accepted accounting principles.
- Independent audits of annual financial statements have received unqualified opinions with no advisory or management letter findings to report.
- The school and education corporation have generally filed key reports timely and accurately including: audit reports, budgets, unaudited quarterly reports of revenue, expenses and enrollment.

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- Explore Brooklyn submitted the audited financial statements for the year ended June 30, 2018 to the Institute by the November 1, 2018 due date. The audit reports continued strong fiscal health at the individual school level and the merged education corporation level.

DOES THE SCHOOL MAINTAIN ADEQUATE FINANCIAL RESOURCES TO ENSURE STABLE OPERATIONS?

Explore and the education corporation have maintained ample financial resources to ensure stable operations.

- The school opened in 2002-03, the school has reported operating surpluses over the current charter term.
- The most recent audited financial statements report operating surpluses for the individual school and merged education corporation.
- The merged education corporation fiscal dashboard in Appendix F reflects fiscally strong with 4.5 months of cash on hand to pay liabilities coming due shortly.
- The education corporation benefits from a combined balance sheet which is a combination of individual schools assets and liabilities. In order to track the operations of any individual school within a merged education corporation, the Institute tracks each individual school's revenues and expenses to report operating surpluses or deficits.
- Explore Charter Schools of Brooklyn had total net assets of approximately \$13.7 million as of June 30, 2018 and had approximately \$13.7 million in cash on hand.
- As a requirement of charter agreements, Explore Charter Schools of Brooklyn has established the separate bank account for the merged dissolution fund reserve of the required \$200,000 for the four operating charters.

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FUTURE PLANS



IF THE SUNY TRUSTEES RENEW THE EDUCATION CORPORATION'S AUTHORITY TO OPERATE THE SCHOOL, ARE ITS PLANS FOR THE SCHOOL REASONABLE, FEASIBLE, AND ACHIEVABLE?

Explore is an academic success, and its partnership with Explore Schools has demonstrated improved outcomes for students over the course of the current charter term. Therefore, the education corporation's plans for the school are reasonable, feasible, and achievable.

Plans for the School's Structure. The education corporation has provided all of the key structural elements for a charter renewal and those elements are reasonable, feasible, and achievable.

Plans for the Educational Program. Explore plans to continue to strengthen the core elements of its program design that has demonstrated increased student achievement over the charter term. With support from schools across the education corporation, Explore and network leaders will continually monitor the quality of instructional delivery and organizational capacity. With a new leadership structure at the network level, the network added support in regard to curricula, instructional leadership, and at-risk programming, which should allow the school to continue improve in these areas. The enhancements at both the school and network levels and Explore meeting or coming close to meeting its Accountability Plan goals, will likely result in the school meeting its academic goals in a subsequent charter term.

Plans for Board Oversight & Governance. Board members express interest in continuing to serve the education corporation in the future. The board plans to recruit and add more members in the future charter term with experience in finance and law.

	CURRENT	END OF NEXT CHARTER TERM
Enrollment	540	540
Grade Span	K-8	K-8
Teaching Staff	53	53
Days of Instruction	180	180

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353 Broadway
Albany, NY 12246

Fiscal & Facility Plans. Based on evidence collected through the renewal review, including a review of the five-year financial plan, Explore Brooklyn presents a reasonable and appropriate fiscal plan for the next charter term including education corporation and school budgets that are feasible and achievable. The education corporation intends to maintain its contractual relationship with the network. The Institute has reviewed the proposed terms of such contract and will review and approve the final contract, and any other network contracts, when executed.

Explore plans to continue instruction for the elementary and middle school grades in one NYCDOE co-location site. The current site is appropriate for the next charter term, and the school plans to remain in its existing space.

The school's Application for Charter Renewal contains all necessary elements as required by the Act. The proposed school calendar allots an appropriate amount of instructional time to meet or exceed instructional time requirements, and taken together with other academic and key design elements, should be sufficient to allow the school to meet its proposed Accountability Plan goals.

Explore

Ax

APPENDICES

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SCHOOL
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ED CORP FISCAL

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APPENDIX A: School Overview

EXPLORE CHARTER SCHOOLS OF BROOKLYN BOARD OF TRUSTEES WITH AUTHORITY
TO OPERATE EXPLORE CHARTER SCHOOL

CHAIR

Henry Mannix

VICE CHAIR

Jana Reed

TREASURER

Peter Walker

TRUSTEES

Morty Ballen

Angela Brice Thomas

Lindsay Danon

Robert Archer

Lindsay Matovich

SCHOOL LEADERS

PRINCIPAL

Latasha Williams, Lower School Principal (2017-18 to Present)

Anwar Abdul Rahman, Upper School Principal (2017-18 to Present)

Michal-Anne Jones, Co-Principal (2014-15 to 2016-17)

Kevin Mara, Co-Principal (2014-15 to 2016-17)

Ken Baum, Superintendent (2012-13 to 2013-14)

Rod Bowen, Principal (2012-13)

Tracy Rebe, Principal (2010-11 to 2011-12)

SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS

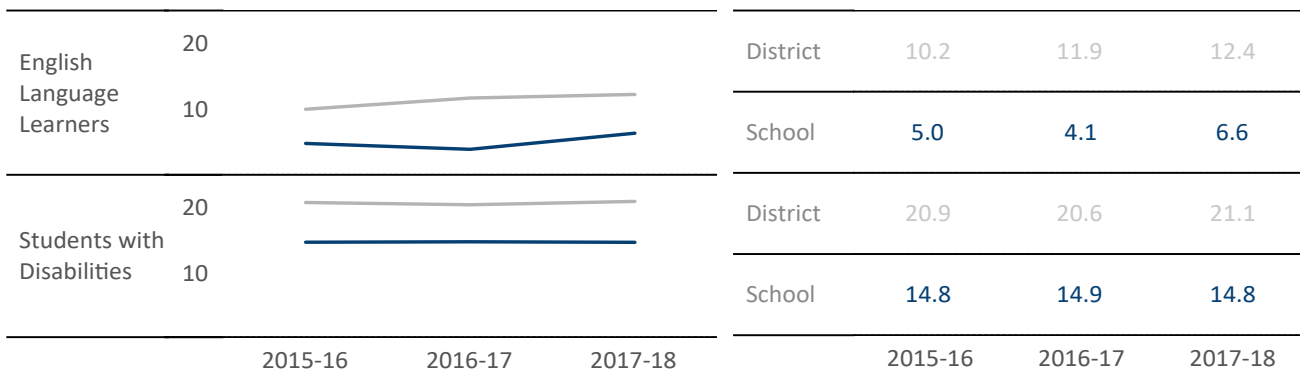
SCHOOL YEAR	CHARTERED ENROLLMENT	ACTUAL ENROLLMENT	ACTUAL AS A PERCENTAGE OF CHARTERED ENROLLMENT	PROPOSED GRADES	ACTUAL GRADES
2016-17	540	518	96%	K-8	K-8
2017-18	540	528	98%	K-8	K-8
2018-19	540	507	94%	K-8	K-8

APPENDIX A: School Overview

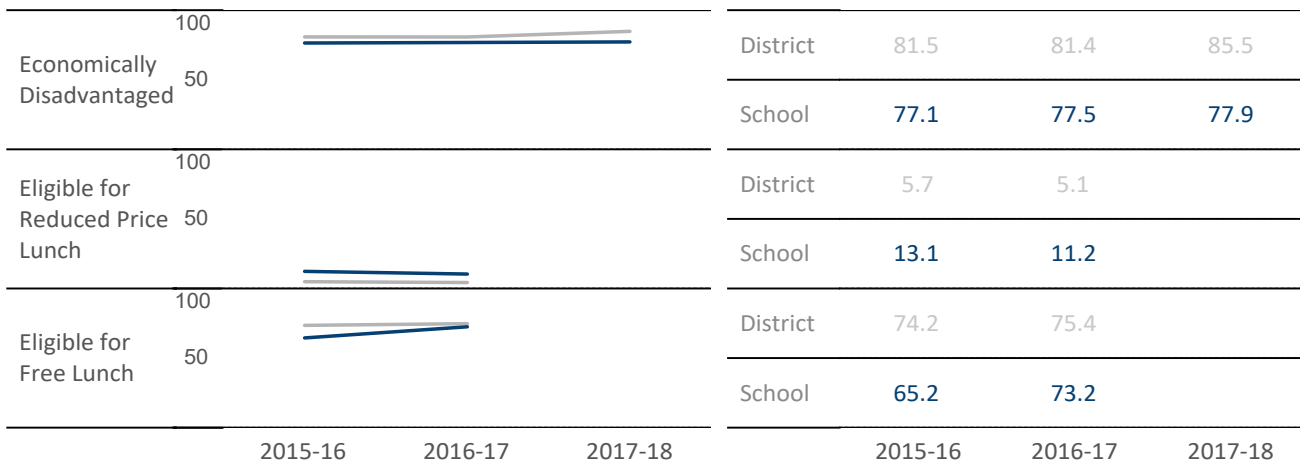
Explore Charter School

CSD 17

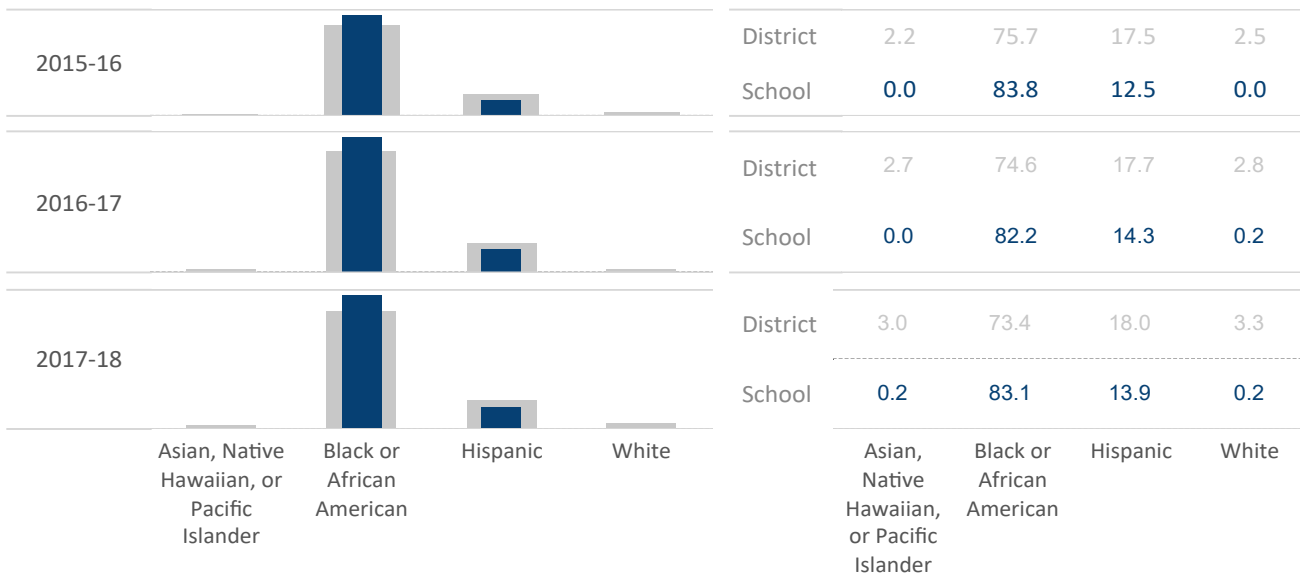
Student Demographics: Special Populations



Student Demographics: Free/Reduced Lunch



Student Demographics: Race/Ethnicity

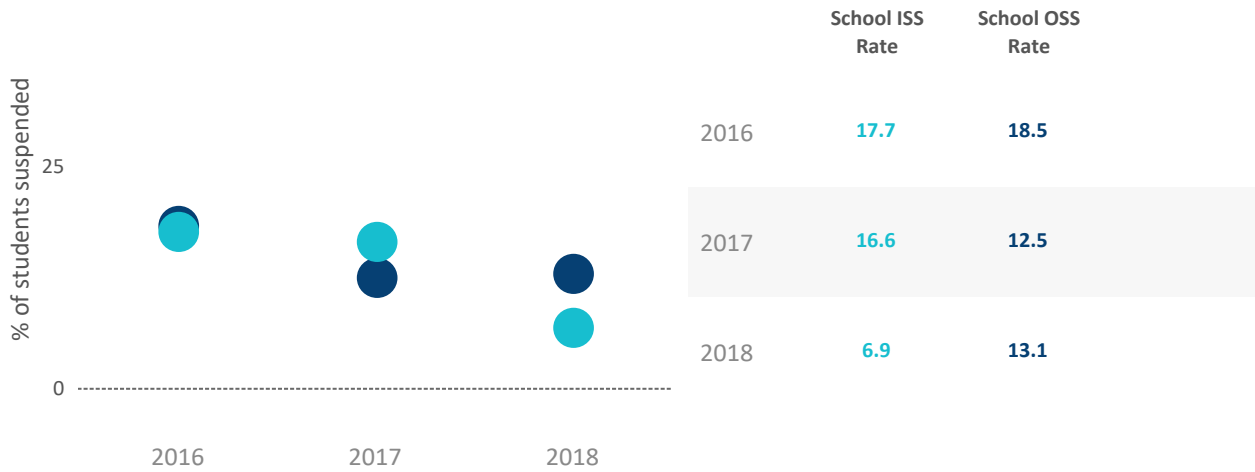


Data reported in these charts reflect BEDS day enrollment counts as reported by the New York State Education Department.

APPENDIX A: School Overview

Explore Charter School

Brooklyn CSD 17



CSD data suitable for comparison are not available. The percentage rate shown here is calculated using the method employed by the New York City Department of Education ("NYCDOE"): the total the number of students receiving an in school or out of school suspension at any time during the school year is divided by the total enrollment, then multiplied by 100.

Persistence in Enrollment: The percentage of students eligible to return from previous year who did return



Expulsions: The number of students expelled from the school each year.



Explore Charter School's Enrollment and Retention Status: 2017-18

			District Target	School
Enrollment	Economically disadvantaged	<div><div></div></div>	91.1	77.3
	English language learners	<div><div></div></div>	10.4	9.9
	Students with disabilities	<div><div></div></div>	15.5	14.2
Retention	Economically disadvantaged	<div><div></div></div>	89.2	91.7
	English language learners	<div><div></div></div>	90.2	97.6
	Students with disabilities	<div><div></div></div>	89.4	100.0

Data reported in these charts reflect information reported by the school and validated by the Institute.

APPENDIX A: School Overview

PARENT SATISFACTION: SURVEY RESULTS

RESPONSE RATE 40%	OVERALL SATISFACTION 94%	TRUST 94%	EFFECTIVE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP 96%	STRONG FAMILY COMMUNITY TIES 93%
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TIMELINE OF CHARTER SCHOOL RENEWAL



SCHOOL VISIT HISTORY

SCHOOL YEAR	VISIT TYPE	DATE
2015-16	Renewal Visit	October 26-27, 2015
2017-18	Evaluation Visit	May 28-30, 2018
2018-19	Renewal Visit	October 17-19, 2018

CONDUCT OF THE RENEWAL VISIT

DATE(S) OF VISIT	EVALUATION TEAM MEMBERS	TITLE
October 17-19, 2018	Andrew Kile	Director of School Evaluation
	Hannah Hansen	School Evaluation Analyst
	Sinnjinn Bucknell	Senior Performance and Systems Analyst
	Carrie Gee	Associate Counsel
	Aretha Miller	External Consultant
	Cheyenne Batista São Roque	External Consultant

APPENDIX A: School Overview

KEY DESIGN ELEMENTS:

ELEMENT	EVIDENT?
We focus on thinking and learning;	+
We utilize common core aligned curricula;	+
We use data to drive daily instruction;	+
We have small teacher student ratios;	+
We put the needs of students first;	+
We meet the needs of at-risk students;	-
We hold high expectations for all students and focus on high school placement;	+
Our schools have a palpable sense of community;	+
We offer staff strategic professional development and opportunities for continuous improvement; and,	+
We promote intellectual preparation and authentic instruction; and, We are committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion.	+

APPENDIX B: Performance Summaries

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE SUMMARY: English Language Arts Explore Charter School

	2015-16 Grades Served: K-8				2016-17 Grades Served: K-8				2017-18 Grades Served: K-8				MET
	All Students		2+ Years Students		All Students		2+ Years Students		All Students		2+ Years Students		
	% (N)		% (N)		% (N)		% (N)		% (N)		% (N)		
	Grades		Grades		Grades		Grades		Grades		Grades		
<u>ABSOLUTE MEASURES</u> 1. Each year 75 percent of students who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at proficiency on the New York State exam.	3	34.5 (55)	35.4 (48)		3	29.3 (58)	28.3 (46)		3	45.8 (59)	44.4 (54)		NO
	4	31.0 (58)	29.4 (51)		4	18.3 (60)	19.6 (51)		4	39.3 (56)	39.2 (51)		
	5	26.7 (60)	26.3 (57)		5	15.8 (57)	15.7 (51)		5	24.6 (57)	25.9 (54)		
	6	21.8 (55)	21.2 (52)		6	22.8 (57)	24.1 (54)		6	42.1 (57)	45.1 (51)		
	7	30.0 (50)	31.3 (48)		7	41.8 (55)	42.6 (54)		7	40.7 (54)	41.2 (51)		
	8	29.1 (55)	28.8 (52)		8	37.5 (48)	37.5 (48)		8	59.6 (57)	60.0 (55)		
	All	28.8 (333)	28.6 (308)		All	27.2 (335)	28.0 (304)		All	42.1 (340)	42.7 (316)		
	Grades	PLI	AMO		Grades	PLI	AMO		Grades	PI	MIP		
	3-8	97	104		3-8	92	111		3-8	125			
	Comparison: Brooklyn District 17				Comparison: Brooklyn District 17				Comparison: Brooklyn District 17				YES
Grades	School	District		Grades	School	District		Grades	School	District			
3-8	28.6	30.2		3-8	28.0	33.5		3-8	42.7	41.7			
4. Each year the school will exceed its predicted percent of students at proficiency on the state exam by at least a small Effect Size (at least 0.3) based on its percentage of Economically Disadvantaged students.	% ED	Actual	Predicted	Effect Size	% ED	Actual	Predicted	Effect Size	% ED	Actual	Predicted	Effect Size	
	70.6	28.8	31.6	-0.16	73.7	27.2	32.2	-0.31	74.5	42.1	38.7	0.18	
	NO				NO				NO				
	Grades	School	State		Grades	School	State		Grades	School	State		
<u>GROWTH MEASURE</u> 5. Each year, the school's unadjusted mean growth percentile will meet or exceed the target of 50.	4	40.2			4	34.1			4	48.4			NO
	5	38.9			5	44.4			5	53.9			
	6	55.5			6	51.1			6	68.3			
	7	53.4			7	45.2			7	60.1			
	8	54.1			8	52.3			8	57.6			
	All	48.6	50.0		All	45.1	50.0		All	57.7	50.0		
	NO				NO				NO				
	Comparison: Brooklyn District 17				Comparison: Brooklyn District 17				Comparison: Brooklyn District 17				
	% ED		Effect Size		% ED		Effect Size		% ED		Effect Size		
	70.6		28.8 31.6 -0.16		73.7		27.2 32.2 -0.31		74.5		42.1 38.7 0.18		

APPENDIX B: Performance Summaries

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE SUMMARY: Mathematics

Explore Charter School

	2015-16 Grades Served: K-8				2016-17 Grades Served: K-8				2017-18 Grades Served: K-8				MET
	All Students % (N)		2+ Years Students % (N)		All Students % (N)		2+ Years Students % (N)		All Students % (N)		2+ Years Students % (N)		
	Grades		Grades		Grades		Grades		Grades		Grades		
	3	25.5 (55)	25.0 (48)		3	20.3 (59)	23.9 (46)		3	55.2 (58)	54.7 (53)		
<u>ABSOLUTE MEASURES</u> 1. Each year 75 percent of students who are enrolled in at least their second year will perform at proficiency on the New York State exam.	4	32.8 (58)	31.4 (51)		4	13.3 (60)	15.7 (51)		4	30.4 (56)	31.4 (51)		
	5	21.7 (60)	22.8 (57)		5	14.0 (57)	15.7 (51)		5	15.8 (57)	16.7 (54)		
	6	56.4 (55)	55.8 (52)		6	35.1 (57)	35.2 (54)		6	61.4 (57)	60.8 (51)		
	7	22.0 (50)	22.9 (48)		7	34.5 (55)	35.2 (54)		7	48.1 (54)	47.1 (51)		
	8	23.6 (55)	25.0 (52)		8	18.8 (48)	18.8 (48)		8	59.6 (57)	60.0 (55)		
	All	30.3 (333)	30.5 (308)	NO	All	22.6 (336)	24.3 (304)	NO	All	45.1 (339)	45.1 (315)	NO	
2. Each year the school's aggregate Performance Level Index on the State exam will meet the Annual Measurable Objective set forth in the State's accountability system.	Grades	PLI	AMO		Grades	PLI	AMO		Grades	PI	MIP		
	3-8	95	101	NO	3-8	80	109	NO	3-8	131		NA	
<u>COMPARATIVE MEASURES</u> 3. Each year the percent of students enrolled in at least their second year and performing at proficiency will be greater than that of students in the same grades in the local district.	Comparison: Brooklyn District 17				Comparison: Brooklyn District 17				Comparison: Brooklyn District 17				
	Grades	School	District		Grades	School	District		Grades	School	District		
	3-8	30.5	27.0	YES	3-8	24.3	26.5	NO	3-8	45.1	33.6	YES	
	% ED	Actual	Predicted	Effect Size	% ED	Actual	Predicted	Effect Size	% ED	Actual	Predicted	Effect Size	
4. Each year the school will exceed its predicted percent of students at proficiency on the State exam by at least a small Effect Size (at least 0.3) based on its percentage of Economically Disadvantaged students.	70.6	30.3	30.8	-0.02	73.7	22.6	31.0	-0.43	74.5	45.1	36.0	0.40	
	NO				NO				NO				
<u>GROWTH MEASURE</u> 5. Each year, the school's unadjusted mean growth percentile will meet or exceed the target of 50.	Grades	School	State		Grades	School	State		Grades	School	State		
	4	45.9			4	34.1			4	60.9			
	5	33.0			5	28.2			5	51.3			
	6	58.8			6	69.4			6	92.1			
	7	59.0			7	23.8			7	75.1			
	8	16.0			8	50.0			8	83.2			
	All	42.0	50.0	NO	All	40.9	50.0	NO	All	72.5	50.0	YES	

APPENDIX C: District Comments

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

The New York City Department of Education held its required hearing on Explore Charter School's renewal on December 17, 2018 at the school. Sixteen people were present and eight people spoke in support of the renewal application. No one spoke in opposition. Parents spoke of their positive experience with school. Several parents spoke how their children were now in college. One family moved to Queens but still sent their children to the school. Students and families stated that the school was like a village with quality teachers that believe in the students. One parent spoke of his positive experience with the school since the beginning citing that he has two students in college, is an active member of the parent organization, and has even had the opportunity to join the board of trustees.

APPENDIX D: Fiscal Dashboard

EXPLORE CHARTER SCHOOL

NOTE: Effective 2015-16 the school merged into the education corporation, "Explore Charter Schools of Brooklyn." Accordingly, see the education corporation report containing the "Balance Sheet" for all schools merged into the education corporation.

SCHOOL INFORMATION

BALANCE SHEET

Assets

Current Assets

Cash and Cash Equivalents - **GRAPH 1**
Grants and Contracts Receivable
Accounts Receivable
Prepaid Expenses
Contributions and Other Receivables

Total Current Assets - **GRAPH 1**

Property, Building and Equipment, net

Other Assets

Total Assets - **GRAPH 1**

Liabilities and Net Assets

Current Liabilities

Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses
Accrued Payroll and Benefits
Deferred Revenue
Current Maturities of Long-Term Debt
Short Term Debt - Bonds, Notes Payable
Other

Total Current Liabilities - **GRAPH 1**

L-T Debt and Notes Payable, net current maturities

Total Liabilities - **GRAPH 1**

Net Assets

Unrestricted
Temporarily restricted

Total Net Assets

Total Liabilities and Net Assets

Opened 2002-03 (Transfer from NYCDOE to SUNY 2015-16)

		MERGED	MERGED	MERGED
	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-

	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
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	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-

	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-

ACTIVITIES

Operating Revenue

Resident Student Enrollment
Students with Disabilities

Grants and Contracts

State and local
Federal - Title and IDEA
Federal - Other
Other
NYC DoE Rental Assistance
Food Service/Child Nutrition Program

Total Operating Revenue

	-	-	7,339,174	7,470,427	7,843,917
	-	-	628,828	635,788	914,090
	-	-	40,232	41,387	27,386
	-	-	181,148	253,182	72,389
	-	-	254,345	42,524	230,718
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	8,443,727	8,443,308	9,088,500

Expenses

Regular Education
SPED
Regular Education & SPED (combined)
Other

Total Program Services

Management and General
Fundraising

Total Expenses - **GRAPHS 2, 3 & 4**

Surplus / (Deficit) From School Operations

	-	-	4,975,734	5,172,210	5,639,296
	-	-	1,625,134	1,605,886	1,808,650
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	6,600,868	6,778,096	7,447,946
	-	-	1,214,912	1,204,120	1,400,132
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	7,815,780	7,982,216	8,848,078
	-	-	627,947	461,092	240,422

Support and Other Revenue

Contributions
Fundraising
Miscellaneous Income
Net assets released from restriction

Total Support and Other Revenue

Total Unrestricted Revenue

Total Temporarily Restricted Revenue

Total Revenue - **GRAPHS 2 & 3**

Change in Net Assets

Net Assets - Beginning of Year - **GRAPH 2**

Prior Year Adjustment(s)

Net Assets - End of Year - **GRAPH 2**

	-	-	-	6,865	1,087
	-	-	7,714	-	-
	-	-	480	814	695
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	8,194	7,679	1,782
	-	-	8,451,922	8,450,987	9,090,282
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	8,451,922	8,450,987	9,090,282
	-	-	636,142	468,771	242,204
	-	-	2,885,174	3,521,315	3,990,086
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	3,521,316	3,990,086	4,232,290

APPENDIX D: Fiscal Dashboard

EXPLORE CHARTER SCHOOL

NOTE: Effective 2015-16 the school merged into the education corporation, "Explore Charter Schools of Brooklyn." Accordingly, see the education corporation report containing the "Balance Sheet" for all schools merged into the education corporation.

SCHOOL INFORMATION - (Continued)

Functional Expense Breakdown

	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Personnel Service					
Administrative Staff Personnel	-	-	552,776	1,017,317	1,505,453
Instructional Personnel	-	-	4,029,839	3,194,934	3,550,689
Non-Instructional Personnel	-	-	-	512,999	-
Personnel Services (Combined)	-	-	-	-	-
Total Salaries and Staff	-	-	4,582,615	4,725,250	5,056,142
Fringe Benefits & Payroll Taxes	-	-	1,031,039	1,151,794	1,122,505
Retirement	-	-	-	-	53,109
Management Company Fees	-	-	867,174	870,341	918,558
Building and Land Rent / Lease	-	-	-	-	-
Staff Development	-	-	99,880	123,930	89,663
Professional Fees, Consultant & Purchased Services	-	-	271,738	272,143	389,135
Marketing / Recruitment	-	-	36,133	11,030	36,350
Student Supplies, Materials & Services	-	-	348,529	306,178	339,229
Depreciation	-	-	130,650	103,079	54,200
Other	-	-	448,021	418,472	789,187
Total Expenses	-	-	7,815,780	7,982,216	8,848,078

SCHOOL ANALYSIS

ENROLLMENT

	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Original Chartered Enrollment	-	-	540	540	540
Final Chartered Enrollment (includes any revisions)	-	-	540	540	540
Actual Enrollment - GRAPH 4	-	-	521	518	528
Chartered Grades	-	-	K-8	K-8	K-8
Final Chartered Grades (includes any revisions)	-	-	-	-	-

Primary School District: NYC CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE

Per Pupil Funding (Weighted Avg of All Districts)					
Increase over prior year	-	-	13,877	14,027	14,527
	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	1.1%	3.4%

PER STUDENT BREAKDOWN

Revenue

Operating	-	-	16,207	16,300	17,213
Other Revenue and Support	-	-	16	15	3
TOTAL - GRAPH 3	-	-	16,222	16,315	17,216

Expenses

Program Services	-	-	12,670	13,085	14,106
Management and General, Fundraising	-	-	2,332	2,325	2,652
TOTAL - GRAPH 3	-	-	15,001	15,410	16,758
% of Program Services	0.0%	0.0%	84.5%	84.9%	84.2%
% of Management and Other	0.0%	0.0%	15.5%	15.1%	15.8%
% of Revenue Exceeding Expenses - GRAPH 5	0.0%	0.0%	8.1%	5.9%	2.7%

Student to Faculty Ratio

	-	-	10.9	10.8	10.0
--	---	---	------	------	------

Faculty to Admin Ratio

	-	-	4.0	3.7	2.3
--	---	---	-----	-----	-----

Financial Responsibility Composite Scores - GRAPH 6

Score	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Fiscally Strong 1.5 - 3.0 / Fiscally Adequate 1.0 - 1.4 / Fiscally Needs Monitoring < 1.0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Working Capital - GRAPH 7

Net Working Capital	0	0	0	0	0
As % of Unrestricted Revenue	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Working Capital (Current) Ratio Score	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Risk (Low ≥ 3.0 / Medium 1.4 - 2.9 / High < 1.4)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Rating (Excellent ≥ 3.0 / Good 1.4 - 2.9 / Poor < 1.4)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Quick (Acid Test) Ratio

Score	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Risk (Low ≥ 2.5 / Medium 1.0 - 2.4 / High < 1.0)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Rating (Excellent ≥ 2.5 / Good 1.0 - 2.4 / Poor < 1.0)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Debt to Asset Ratio - GRAPH 7

Score	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Risk (Low < 0.50 / Medium 0.51 - .95 / High > 1.0)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Rating (Excellent < 0.50 / Good 0.51 - .95 / Poor > 1.0)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Months of Cash - GRAPH 8

Score	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Risk (Low > 3 mo. / Medium 1 - 3 mo. / High < 1 mo.)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Rating (Excellent > 3 mo. / Good 1 - 3 mo. / Poor < 1 mo.)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

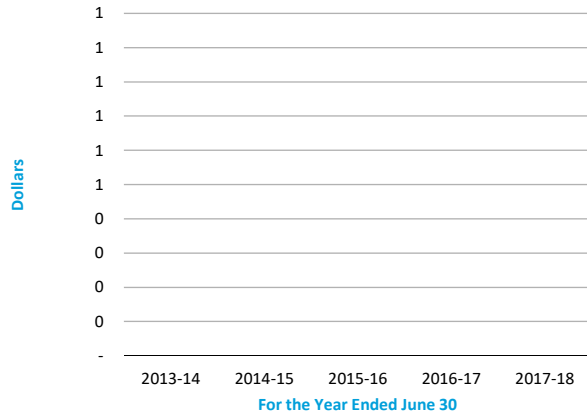
APPENDIX D: Fiscal Dashboard

EXPLORE CHARTER SCHOOL

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GRAPH 1

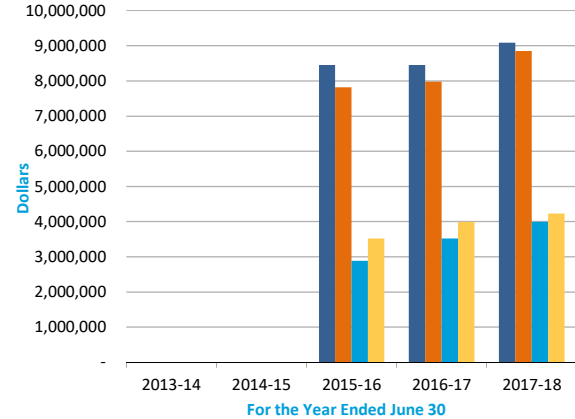
Cash, Assets and Liabilities



This chart illustrates the relationship between assets and liabilities and to what extent cash reserves makes up current assets. Ideally for each subset, subsets 2 through 4, (i.e. current assets vs. current liabilities), the column on the left is taller than the immediate column on the right; and, generally speaking, the bigger that gap, the better.

GRAPH 2

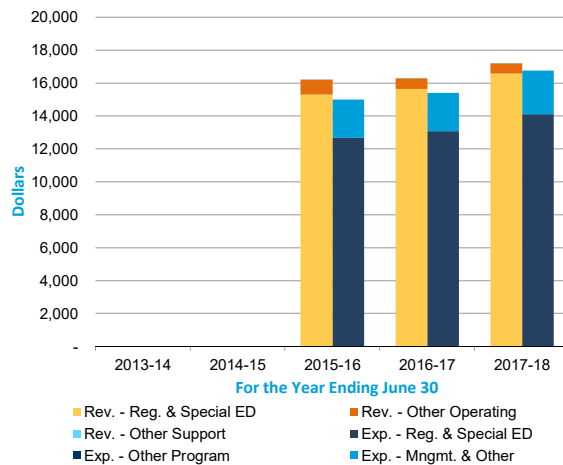
Revenue, Expenses and Net Assets



This chart illustrates total revenue and expenses each year and the relationship those subsets have on the increase/decrease of net assets on a year-to-year basis. Ideally subset 1, revenue, will be taller than subset 2, expenses, and as a result subset 3, net assets - beginning, will increase each year, building a more fiscally viable school.

GRAPH 3

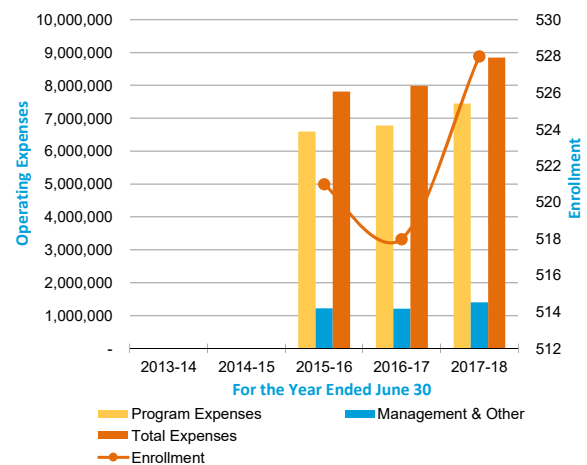
Revenue & Expenses Per Pupil



This chart illustrates the breakdown of revenue and expenses on a per pupil basis. Caution should be exercised in making school-by-school comparisons since schools serving different missions or student populations are likely to have substantially different educational cost bases. Comparisons with similar schools with similar dynamics are most valid.

GRAPH 4

Enrollment vs. Operating Expenses



This chart illustrates to what extent the school's operating expenses have followed its student enrollment pattern. A baseline assumption that this data tests is that operating expenses increase with each additional student served. This chart also compares and contrasts growth trends of both, giving insight into what a reasonable expectation might be in terms of economies of scale.

APPENDIX D: Fiscal Dashboard

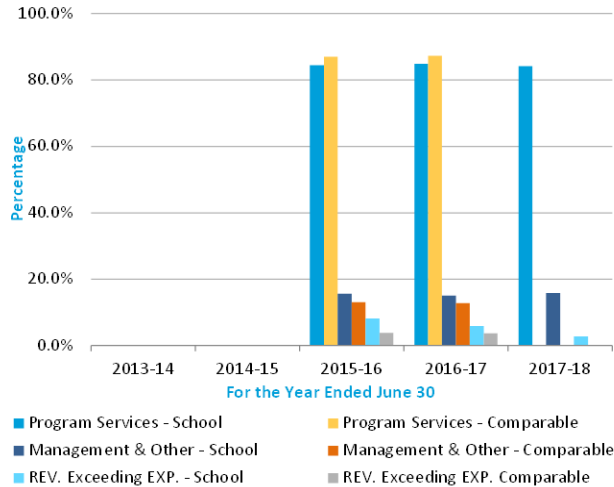
EXPLORE CHARTER SCHOOL

NOTE: Effective 2015-16 the school merged into the education corporation, "Explore Charter Schools of Brooklyn." Accordingly, see the education corporation report containing the "Balance Sheet" for all schools merged into the education corporation.

Comparable School, Region or Network: All SUNY Authorized Charter Schools (Including Closed Schools)

GRAPH 5

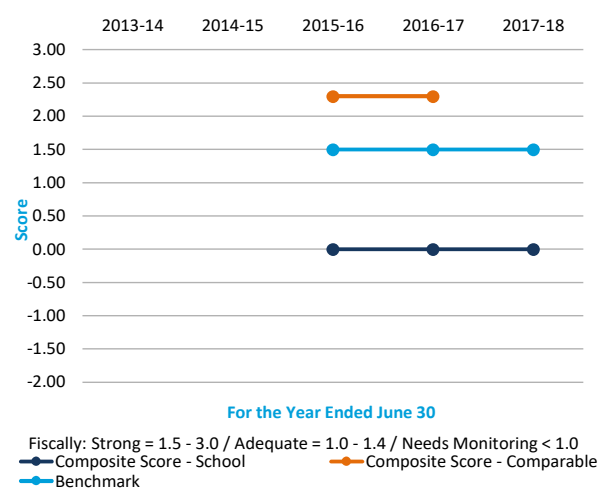
% Breakdown of Expenses



This chart illustrates the percentage expense breakdown between program services and management & others as well as the percentage of revenues exceeding expenses. Ideally the percentage expense for program services will far exceed that of the management & other expense. The percentage of revenues exceeding expenses should not be negative. Similar caution, as mentioned on GRAPH 3, should be used in comparing schools.

GRAPH 6

Composite Score

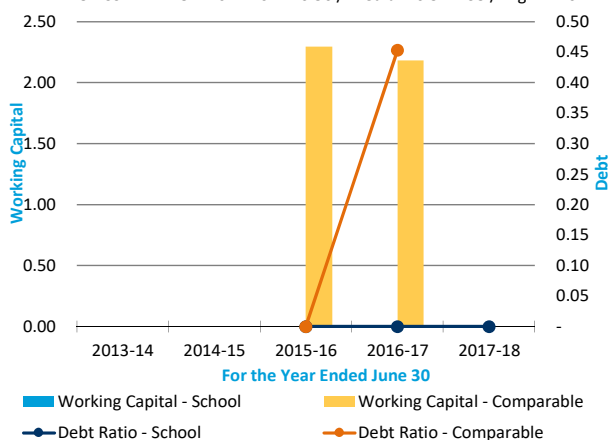


This chart illustrates a school's composite score based on the methodology developed by the United States Department of Education (USDOE) to determine whether private not-for-profit colleges and universities are financially strong enough to participate in federal loan programs. These scores can be valid for observing the fiscal trends of a particular school and used as a tool to compare the results of different schools.

GRAPH 7

Working Capital & Debt to Asset Ratios

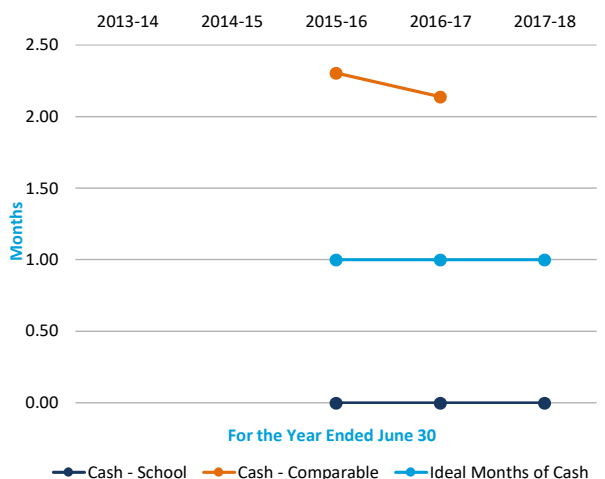
WORKING CAPITAL RATIO - Risk = Low > 3.0 / Medium 1.4 - 2.9 / High < 1.4
 DEBT TO ASSET RATIO - Risk = Low < 0.50 / Medium 0.51 - .95 / High > 1.0



This chart illustrates working capital and debt to asset ratios. The working capital ratio indicates if a school has enough short-term assets to cover its immediate liabilities/short term debt. The debt to asset ratio indicates what proportion of debt a school has relative to its assets. The measure gives an idea to the leverage of the school along with the potential risks the school faces in terms of its debt-load.

GRAPH 8

Months of Cash



This chart illustrates how many months of cash the school has in reserves. This metric is to measure solvency – the school's ability to pay debts and claims as they come due. This gives some idea of how long a school could continue its ongoing operating costs without tapping into some other, non-cash form of financing in the event that revenues were to cease flowing to the school.

APPENDIX E: Education Corporation Overview

EDUCATION CORPORATION TIMELINE OF CHARTER RENEWAL

● School Opening ▲ Initial Renewal - Short-Term ◆ Renewal by Original Authorizer ◇ Subsequent Renewal Recommendation



*Currently, the education corporation must meet specific conditions to open these two schools. Additionally, the education corporation has not indicated a timeline for opening these two charter schools.

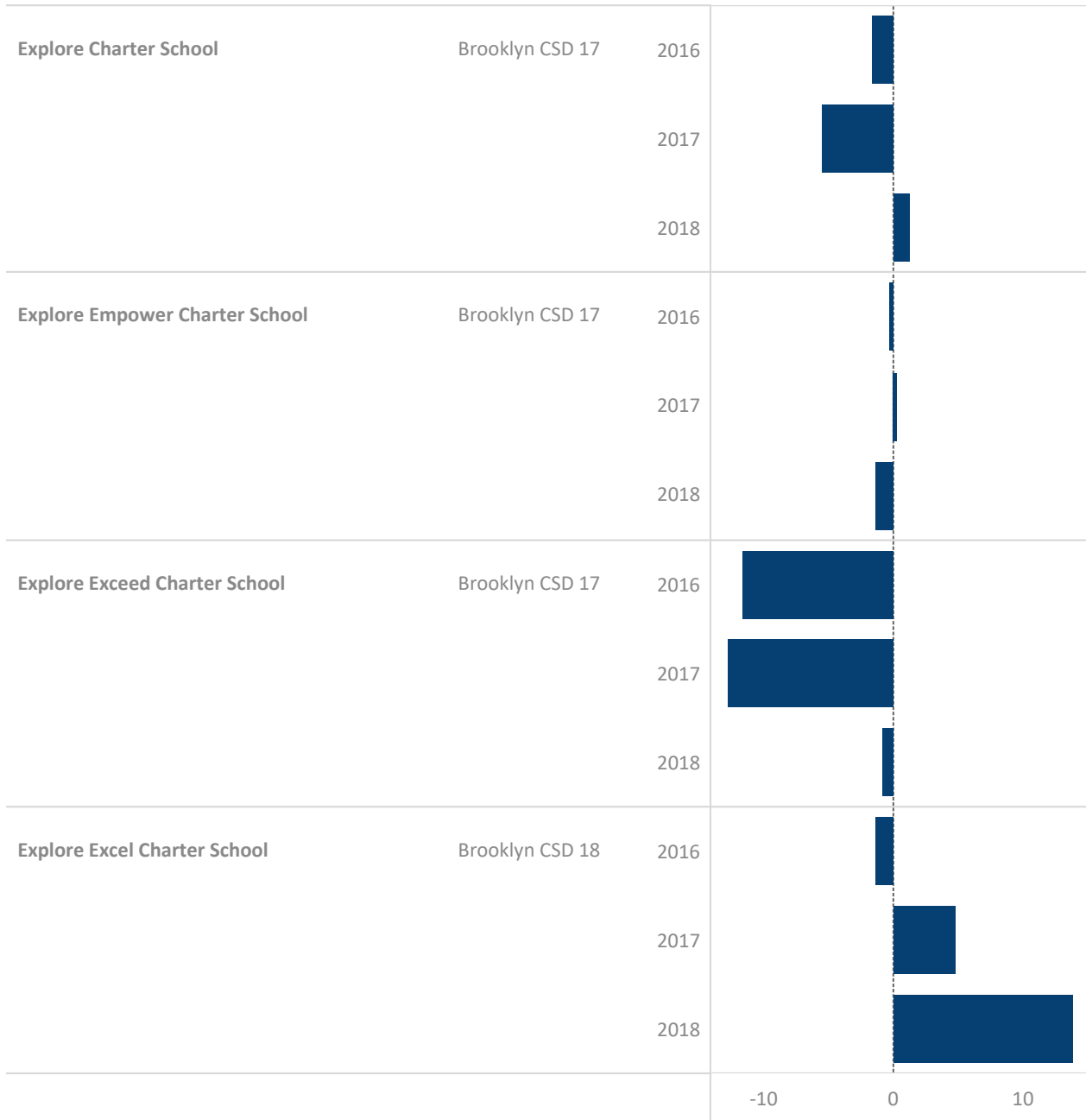
APPENDIX E: Education Corporation Overview

EDUCATION CORPORATION SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS

School	Local District	Co-located?	Chartered Enrollment	Grade Span
Explore Charter School	CSD 17	Yes	540	K-8
Explore Empower Charter School	CSD 17	Yes	540	K-8
Explore Enrich Charter School	CSD 17	Not open	Not open	Not open
Explore Envision Charter School	CSD 19	Not open	Not open	Not open
Explore Exceed Charter School	CSD 17	Yes	564	K-8
Explore Excel Charter School	CSD 18	Yes	552	K-8

APPENDIX E: Education Corporation Overview

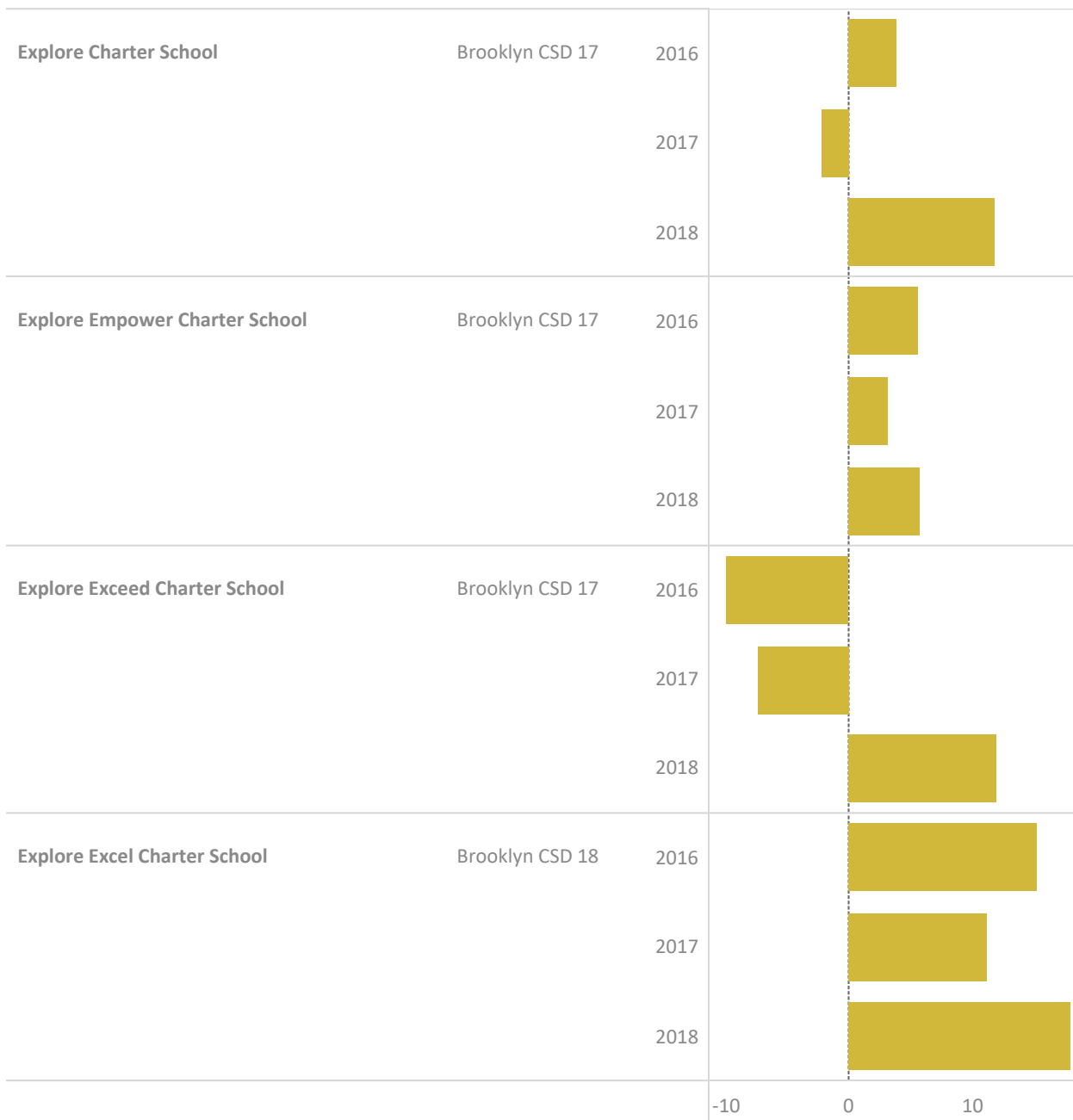
DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SCHOOLS AND DISTRICT SCORES: ELA



District difference for each year broken down by school and district (in NYC, the Institute uses the CSD). These charts compare a school's performance to that of the district. Each bar represents the difference between the school's performance and the district's. A positive result (showing the bar to the right of zero) indicates the amount by which the school outscored the district. A negative result (with the bar to the left of zero) illustrates the amount by which the school performed lower than the district. A score of zero indicates that the school performed exactly even with the district. School scores reflect the achievement of students enrolled for at least two years per the schools' Accountability Plans.

APPENDIX E: Education Corporation Overview

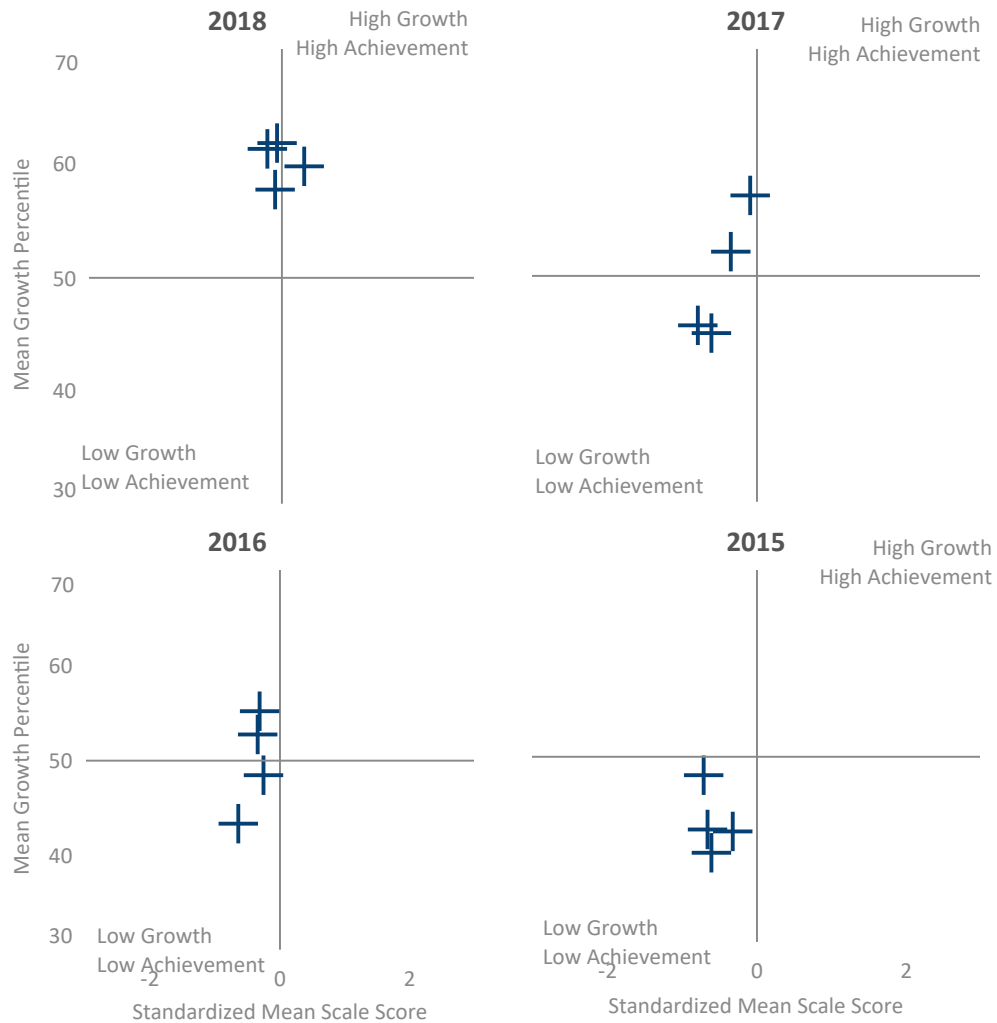
DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SCHOOLS AND DISTRICT SCORES: MATH



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APPENDIX E: Education Corporation Overview

ELA GROWTH AND ACHIEVEMENT: 2014-15 THROUGH 2017-18

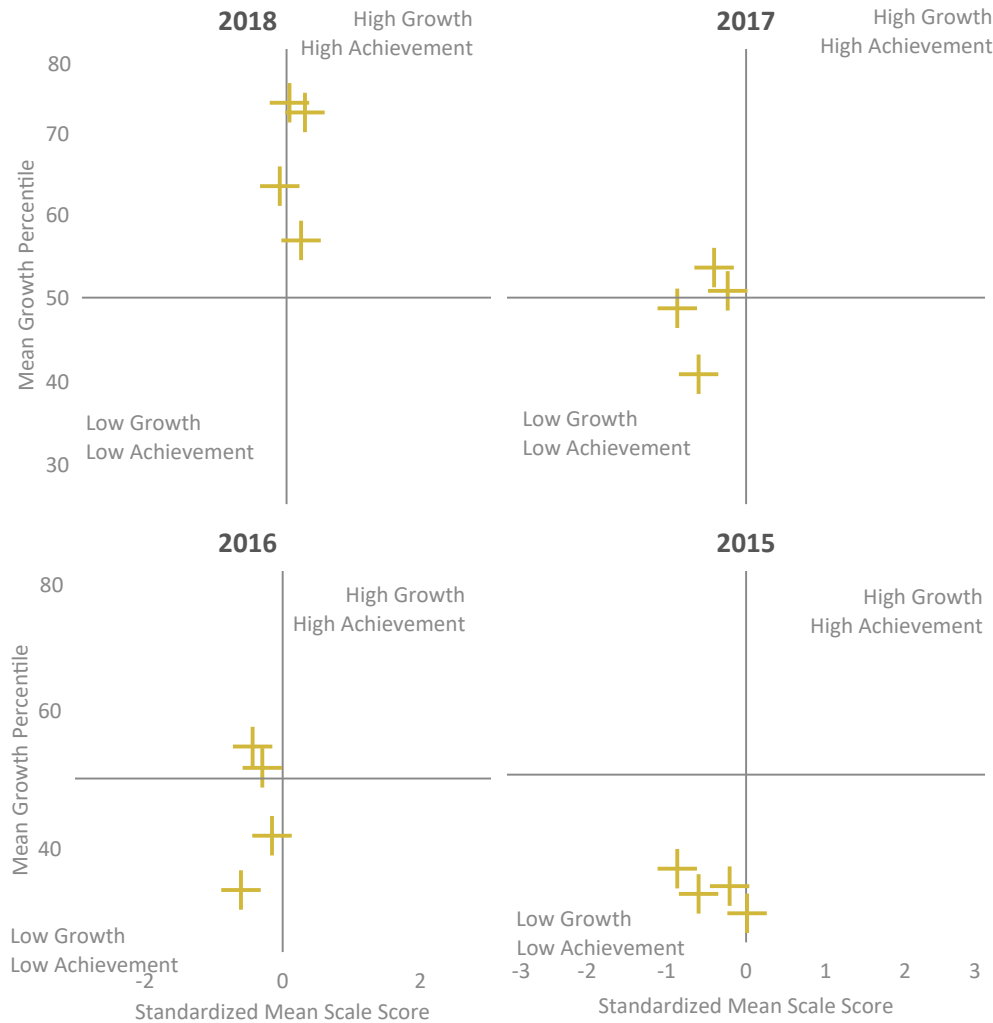


These charts compare a school's ability to grow student achievement with a school's absolute student performance. Schools located in the upper right hand quadrant of each chart show strong results in helping students make learning gains while at the same time helping students achieve strong absolute scores on state assessments. Schools in the lower right hand quadrant show strong absolute scores but lower growth. Because the student growth percentile uses the previous year's scale score as a baseline, it becomes more difficult for a school to maintain strong overall growth scores when students already post high absolute scores.

These charts are produced by comparing growth as measured by the state's student growth percentile to its overall achievement as measured by scale score standardized to the statewide grade level mean over each year for which data are available during the charter term. The growth axis (labeled Mean Growth Percentile) represents the statewide median growth score. The achievement axis (labeled Standardized Mean Scale Score) represents the statewide mean-centered achievement level for each grade served by each school.

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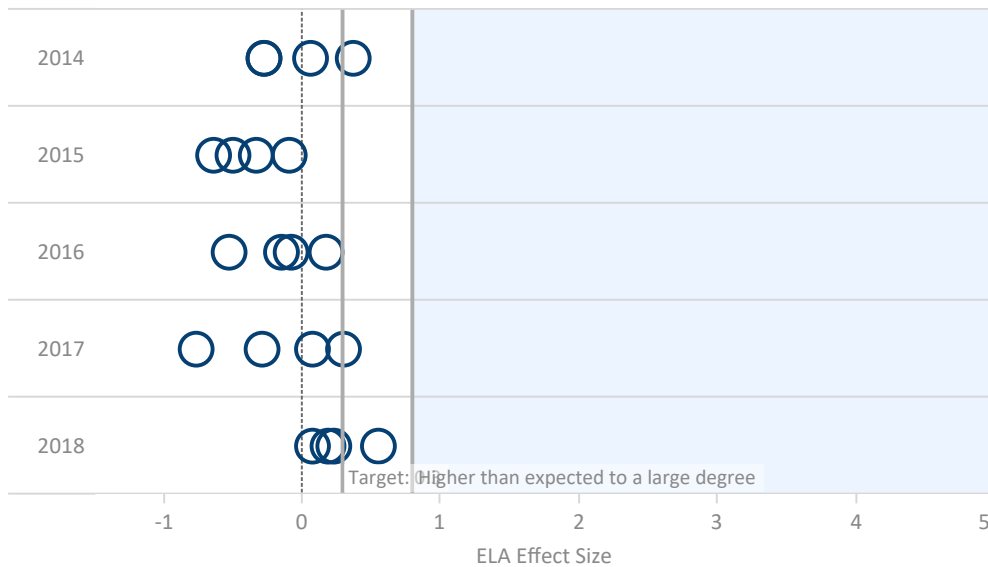
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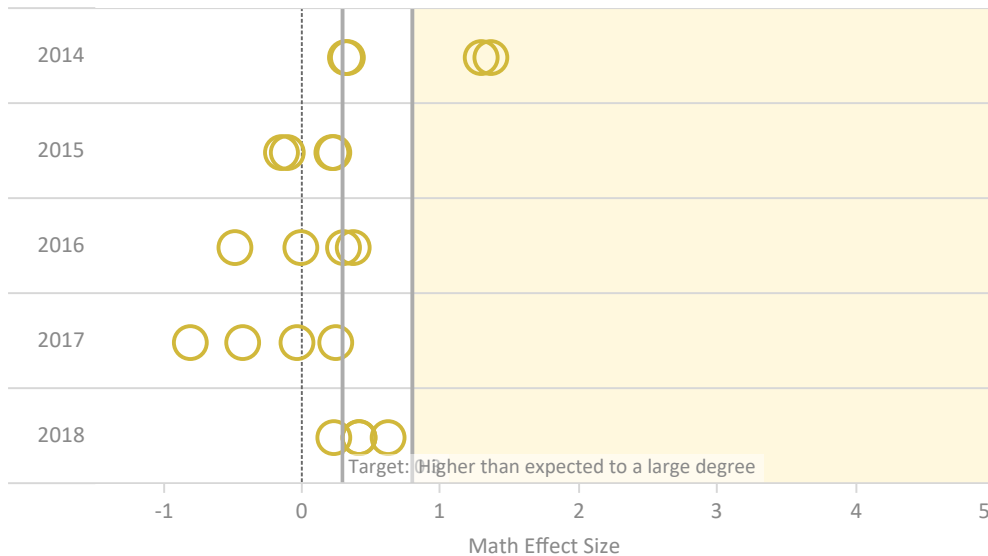
APPENDIX E: Education Corporation Overview

ELA AND MATH EFFECT SIZE DOT PLOTS: 2013-14 THROUGH 2017-18

ELA Effect Size by Year and School



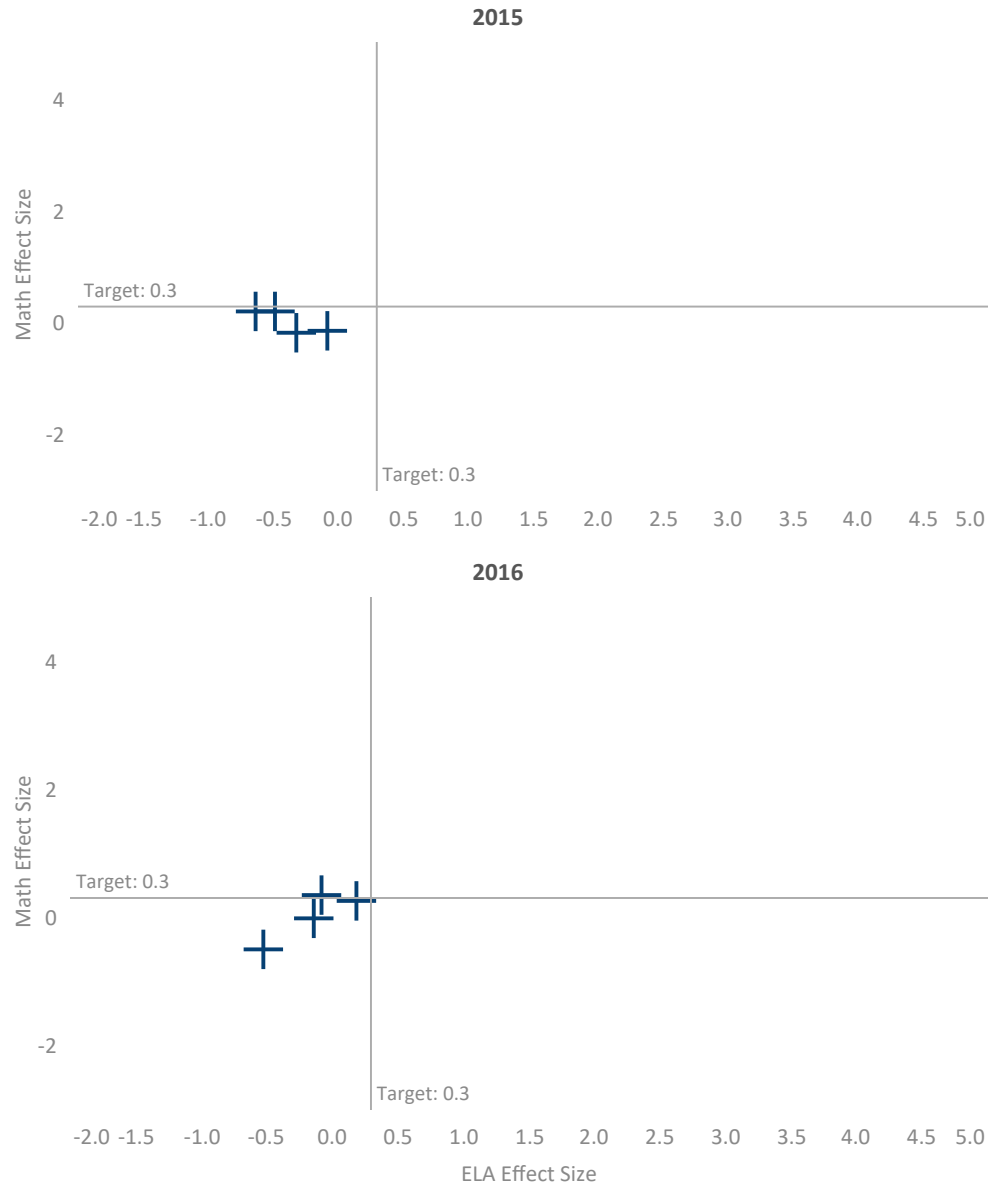
Math Effect Size by Year and School



The charts illustrate the comparative effect size performance at each school across the ed corp by each year for which data are available throughout the charter term. Schools performing at or above 0.3 are meeting SUNY's benchmark for the measure. Schools performing at or above 0.8 are performing higher than expected to a large degree in comparison to schools enrolling similar levels of economically disadvantaged students.

APPENDIX E: Education Corporation Overview

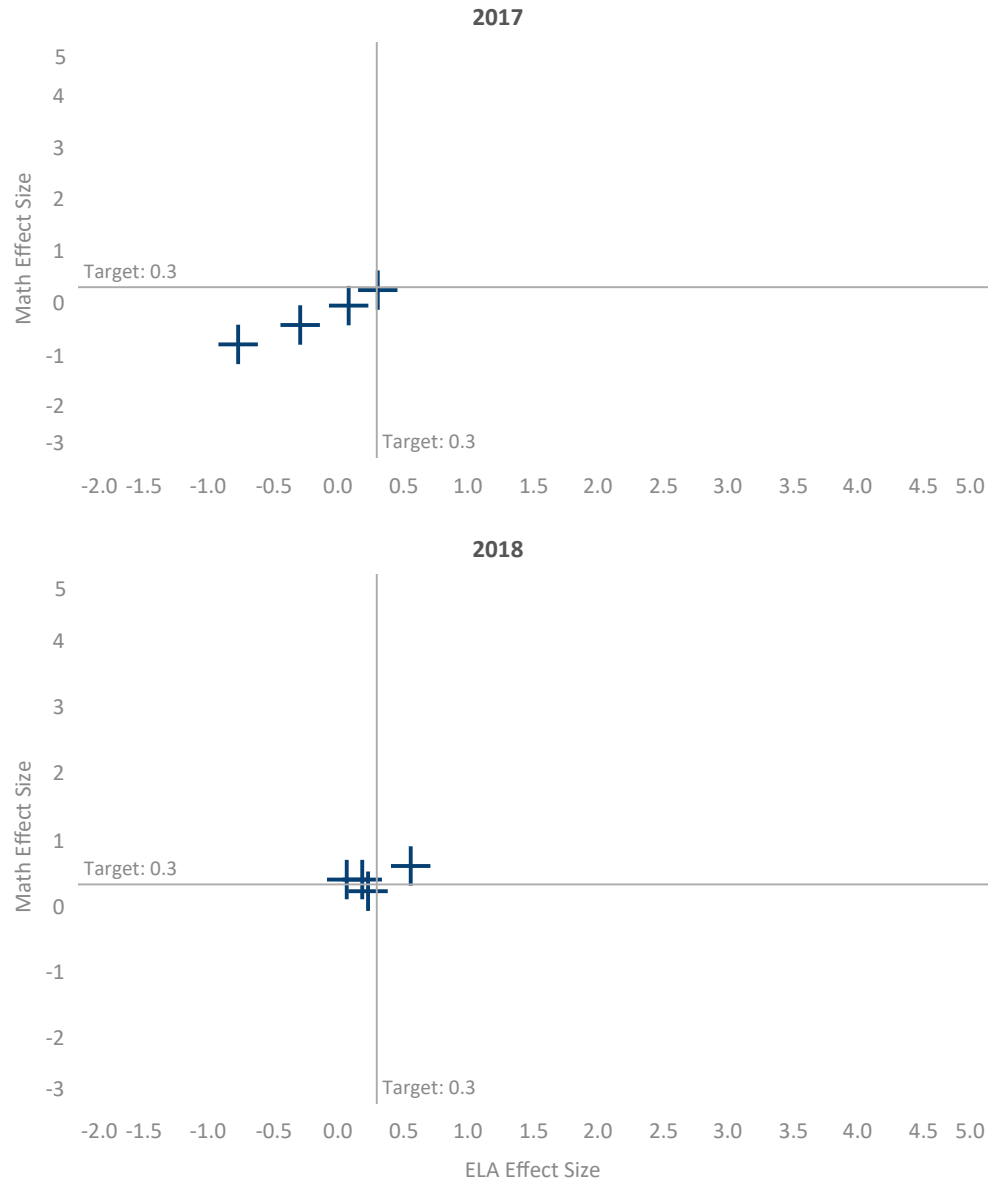
ELA AND MATH EFFECT SIZE SCATTER PLOTS 2014-15 THROUGH 2015-16



The charts compare a school's ELA and math effect sizes over each year for which data are available during the charter term. An effect size measures school performance in comparison to other schools statewide enrolling students with similar proportions of economic disadvantage. Schools with an ELA or math effect size that is less than 0 performed lower than expected based on the economic disadvantage statistic. Schools posting an effect size greater than 0 but less than 0.3 perform about the same as the comparison schools. Schools with an ELA or math effect size greater than 0.3 (SUNY's performance target for the measure) outperformed similar schools statewide to a meaningful degree, while schools with effect sizes greater than 0.8 perform higher than expected to a large degree.

APPENDIX E: Education Corporation Overview

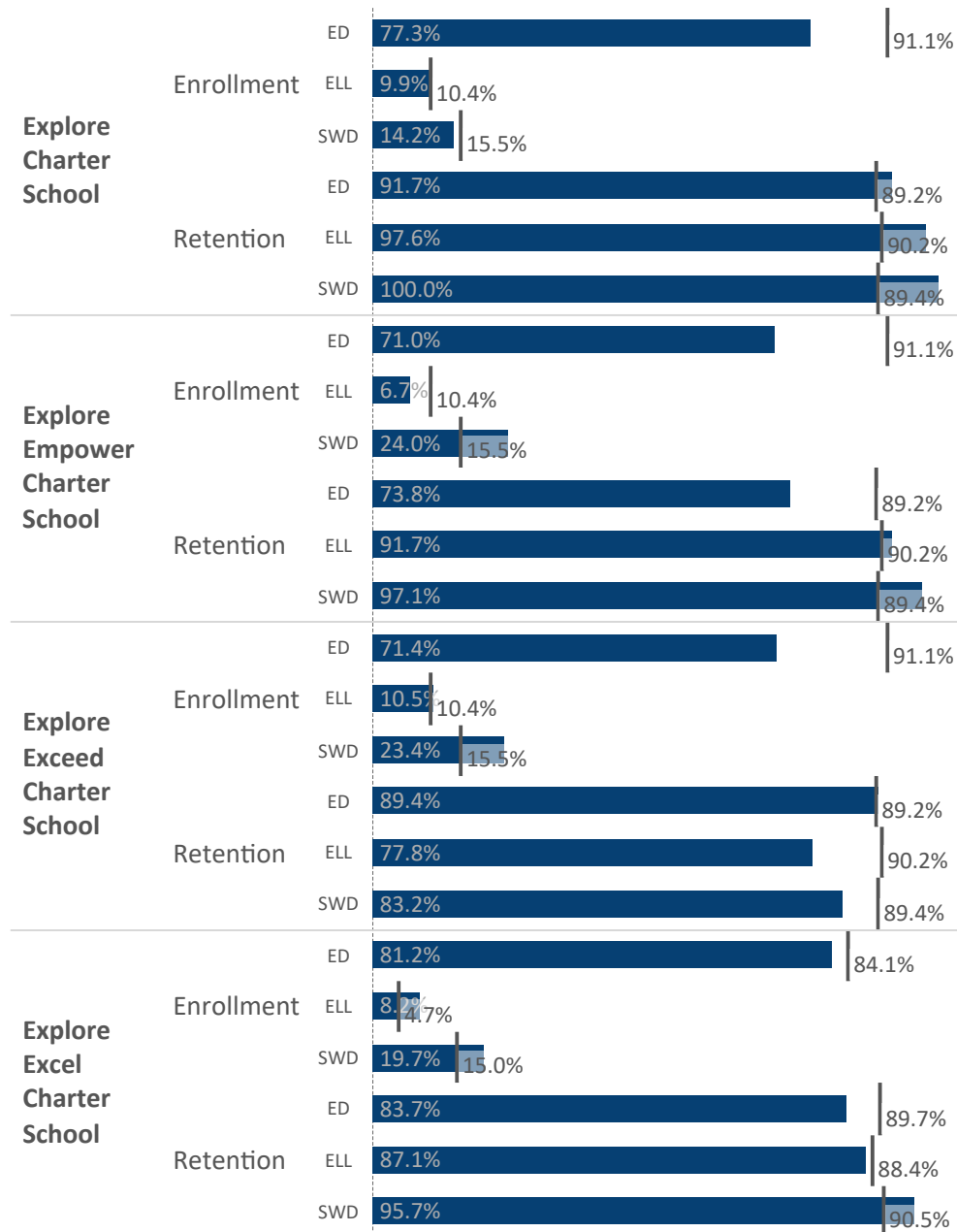
ELA AND MATH EFFECT SIZE SCATTER PLOTS 2016-17 THROUGH 2017-18



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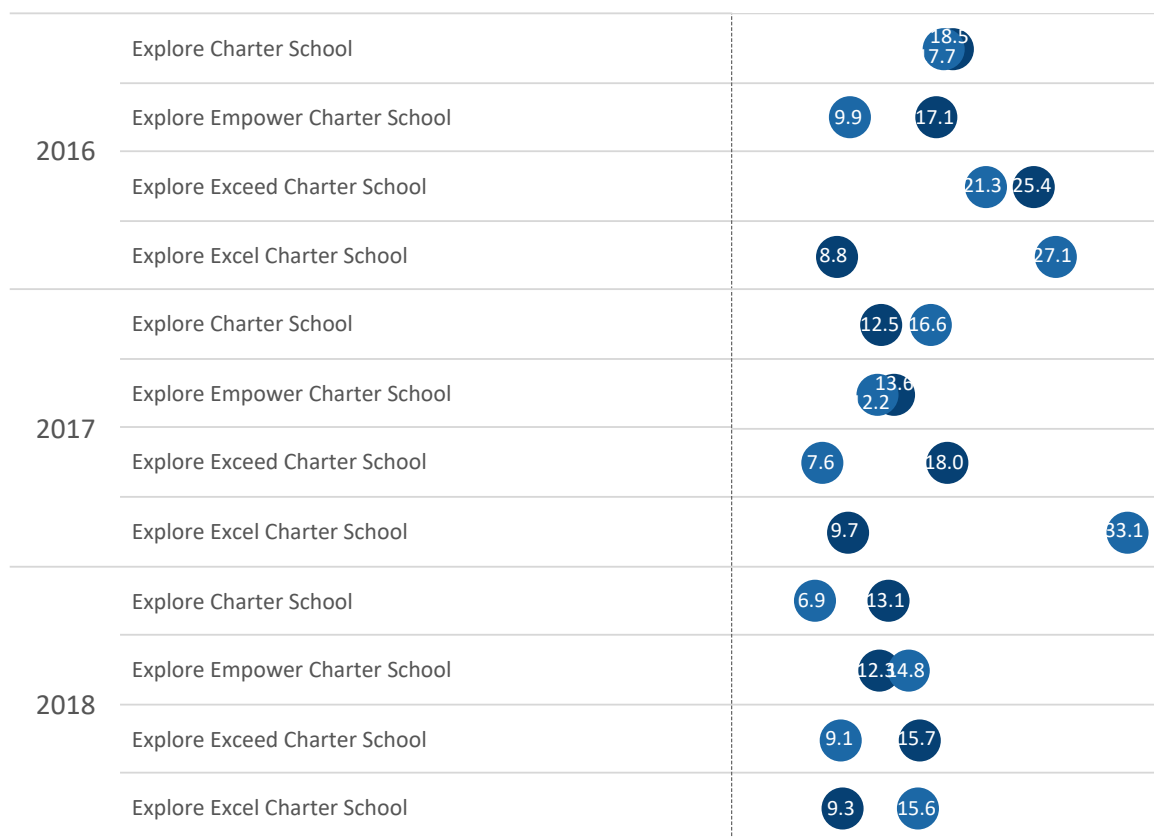
ENROLLMENT AND RETENTION TARGETS



The chart illustrates the **current enrollment and retention percentages** against the **enrollment and retention targets** for each operating school in the education corporation. As required by Education Law § 2851(4)(e), a school must include in its renewal application information regarding the efforts it has, and will, put in place to meet or exceed SUNY's enrollment and retention targets for students with disabilities, ELLs, and FRPL students. This analysis is based on the 2017-18 enrollment and retention data supplied to the Institute by the network.

APPENDIX E: Education Corporation Overview

Suspensions: Explore Charter Schools' out of school suspension rate and in school suspension rate.



% of students suspended

New York City Community School District data suitable for comparison is not available. The percentage rate shown here is calculated using the method employed by the New York City Department of Education: the total the number of students receiving an out of school suspension at any time during the school year is divided by the total enrollment, then multiplied by 100.

In 2015-16, Explore Charter Schools expelled 4 students.
In 2016-17, Explore Charter Schools expelled 2 students.
In 2017-18, Explore Charter Schools expelled 0 students.

APPENDIX E: Education Corporation Overview

PERSISTENCE IN ENROLLMENT



APPENDIX F: Ed Corp Fiscal Dashboard

EXPLORE CHARTER SCHOOLS OF BROOKLYN (COMBINED)

SCHOOL INFORMATION

BALANCE SHEET

Assets

Current Assets

Cash and Cash Equivalents - **GRAPH 1**
Grants and Contracts Receivable
Accounts Receivable
Prepaid Expenses
Contributions and Other Receivables

Total Current Assets - **GRAPH 1**

Property, Building and Equipment, net

Other Assets

Total Assets - **GRAPH 1**

Liabilities and Net Assets

Current Liabilities

Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses
Accrued Payroll and Benefits
Deferred Revenue
Current Maturities of Long-Term Debt
Short Term Debt - Bonds, Notes Payable
Other

Total Current Liabilities - **GRAPH 1**

L-T Debt and Notes Payable, net current maturities

Total Liabilities - **GRAPH 1**

Net Assets

Unrestricted
Temporarily restricted

Total Net Assets

Total Liabilities and Net Assets

ACTIVITIES

Operating Revenue

Resident Student Enrollment
Students with Disabilities

Grants and Contracts

State and local
Federal - Title and IDEA
Federal - Other
Other
NYC DoE Rental Assistance
Food Service/Child Nutrition Program

Total Operating Revenue

Expenses

Regular Education
SPED
Regular Education & SPED (combined)
Other

Total Program Services

Management and General
Fundraising

Total Expenses - **GRAPHS 2, 3 & 4**

Surplus / (Deficit) From School Operations

Support and Other Revenue

Contributions
Fundraising
Miscellaneous Income
Net assets released from restriction

Total Support and Other Revenue

Total Unrestricted Revenue

Total Temporarily Restricted Revenue

Total Revenue - **GRAPHS 2 & 3**

Change in Net Assets

Net Assets - Beginning of Year - **GRAPH 2**

Prior Year Adjustment(s)

Net Assets - End of Year - **GRAPH 2**

		MERGED	MERGED	MERGED
	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
	-	-	12,843,448	12,879,348
	-	-	923,791	1,829,997
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	262,112	164,847
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	14,029,351	14,874,192
	-	-	1,650,315	1,696,845
	-	-	290,942	291,080
	-	-	15,970,608	16,862,117

	-	-	999,241	783,526
	-	-	2,004,616	2,407,461
	-	-	70,305	60,204
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	1,180,038	66,183
	-	-	4,254,200	3,317,374
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	4,254,200	3,317,374

	-	-	11,716,408	13,544,743
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	11,716,408	13,544,743
	-	-	15,970,608	16,862,117

	-	-	27,199,080	29,323,776
	-	-	3,936,799	4,257,517

	-	-	146,509	166,226
	-	-	637,120	1,174,377
	-	-	839,029	315,640
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	32,758,537	35,237,536

	-	-	18,452,967	20,119,741
	-	-	7,181,071	7,747,708
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	25,634,038	27,867,449
	-	-	5,072,207	5,570,252
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	30,706,245	33,437,701
	-	-	2,052,292	1,799,835

	-	-	-	27,104
	-	-	29,868	-
	-	-	1,033	1,398
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	30,901	28,502

	-	-	32,789,439	35,266,038
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	32,789,439	35,266,038

	-	-	2,083,194	1,828,337
	-	-	9,633,215	11,716,408
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	11,716,409	13,544,745

APPENDIX F: Ed Corp Fiscal Dashboard

EXPLORE CHARTER SCHOOLS OF BROOKLYN (COMBINED)

SCHOOL INFORMATION - (Continued)

Functional Expense Breakdown

	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Personnel Service	-	-	2,342,458	4,193,063	6,462,965
Administrative Staff Personnel	-	-	15,405,056	13,004,739	15,018,245
Instructional Personnel	-	-	-	2,500,331	-
Non-Instructional Personnel	-	-	-	-	-
Personnel Services (Combined)	-	-	-	-	-
Total Salaries and Staff	-	-	17,747,514	19,698,134	21,481,210
Fringe Benefits & Payroll Taxes	-	-	4,203,005	4,736,596	4,892,991
Retirement	-	-	-	-	160,748
Management Company Fees	-	-	3,213,707	3,414,567	3,570,720
Building and Land Rent / Lease	-	-	-	-	-
Staff Development	-	-	390,859	520,438	469,780
Professional Fees, Consultant & Purchased Services	-	-	1,135,251	1,282,033	1,724,811
Marketing / Recruitment	-	-	142,827	183,139	190,135
Student Supplies, Materials & Services	-	-	1,373,302	1,234,614	1,250,917
Depreciation	-	-	526,004	491,158	153,068
Other	-	-	1,973,773	1,877,024	3,067,782
Total Expenses	-	-	30,706,242	33,437,701	36,962,162

SCHOOL ANALYSIS

ENROLLMENT

	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Original Chartered Enrollment	-	-	2,376	2,718	2,952
Final Chartered Enrollment (includes any revisions)	-	-	2,000	2,122	2,196
Actual Enrollment - GRAPH 4	-	-	1,935	2,031	2,049
Chartered Grades	-	-	-	-	-
Final Chartered Grades (includes any revisions)	-	-	-	-	-

Primary School District:

Per Pupil Funding (Weighted Avg of All Districts)	-	-	-	-	-
Increase over prior year	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

PER STUDENT BREAKDOWN

Revenue

Operating	-	-	16,930	17,350	18,112
Other Revenue and Support	-	-	16	14	10
TOTAL - GRAPH 3	-	-	16,946	17,364	18,122

Expenses

Program Services	-	-	13,248	13,721	15,078
Management and General, Fundraising	-	-	2,621	2,743	2,961
TOTAL - GRAPH 3	-	-	15,870	16,464	18,039
% of Program Services	0.0%	0.0%	83.5%	83.3%	83.6%
% of Management and Other	0.0%	0.0%	16.5%	16.7%	16.4%
% of Revenue Exceeding Expenses - GRAPH 5	0.0%	0.0%	6.8%	5.5%	0.5%

Student to Faculty Ratio

Faculty to Admin Ratio

Financial Responsibility Composite Scores - GRAPH 6

Score	0.0	0.0	3.0	3.0	2.7
Fiscally Strong 1.5 - 3.0 / Fiscally Adequate 1.0 - 1.4 / Fiscally Needs Monitoring < 1.0	N/A	N/A	Fiscally Strong	Fiscally Strong	Fiscally Strong

Working Capital - GRAPH 7

Net Working Capital	0	0	9,775,151	11,556,818	11,418,338
As % of Unrestricted Revenue	0.0%	0.0%	29.8%	32.8%	30.8%
Working Capital (Current) Ratio Score	0.0	0.0	3.3	4.5	4.2
Risk (Low ≥ 3.0 / Medium 1.4 - 2.9 / High < 1.4)	N/A	N/A	LOW	LOW	LOW
Rating (Excellent ≥ 3.0 / Good 1.4 - 2.9 / Poor < 1.4)	N/A	N/A	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent

Quick (Acid Test) Ratio

Score	0.0	0.0	3.2	4.4	4.1
Risk (Low ≥ 2.5 / Medium 1.0 - 2.4 / High < 1.0)	N/A	N/A	LOW	LOW	LOW
Rating (Excellent ≥ 2.5 / Good 1.0 - 2.4 / Poor < 1.0)	N/A	N/A	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent

Debt to Asset Ratio - GRAPH 7

Score	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.2	0.2
Risk (Low < 0.50 / Medium 0.51 - .95 / High > 1.0)	N/A	N/A	LOW	LOW	LOW
Rating (Excellent < 0.50 / Good 0.51 - .95 / Poor > 1.0)	N/A	N/A	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent

Months of Cash - GRAPH 8

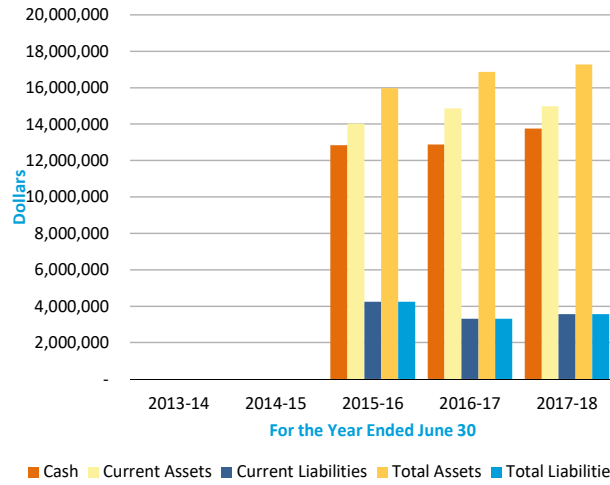
Score	0.0	0.0	5.0	4.6	4.5
Risk (Low > 3 mo. / Medium 1 - 3 mo. / High < 1 mo.)	N/A	N/A	LOW	LOW	LOW
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APPENDIX F: Ed Corp Fiscal Dashboard

EXPLORE CHARTER SCHOOLS OF BROOKLYN (COMBINED)

GRAPH 1

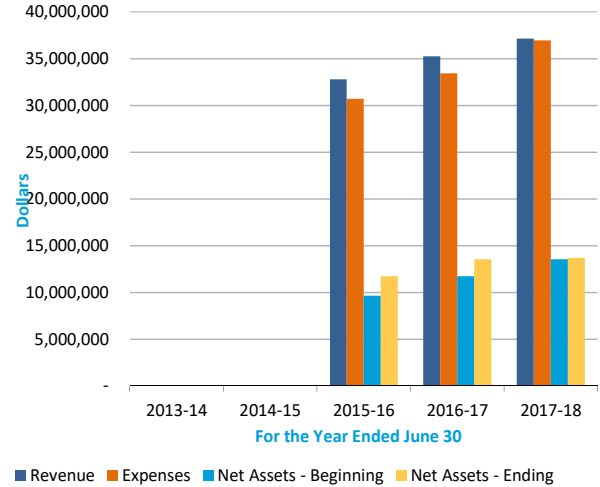
Cash, Assets and Liabilities



This chart illustrates the relationship between assets and liabilities and to what extent cash reserves makes up current assets. Ideally for each subset, subsets 2 through 4, (i.e. current assets vs. current liabilities), the column on the left is taller than the immediate column on the right; and, generally speaking, the bigger that gap, the better.

GRAPH 2

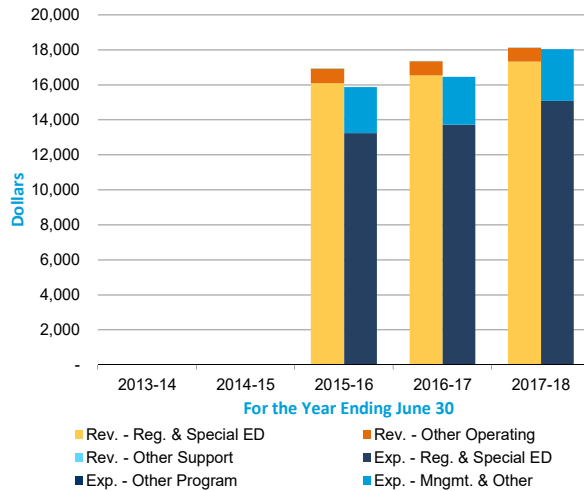
Revenue, Expenses and Net Assets



This chart illustrates total revenue and expenses each year and the relationship those subsets have on the increase/decrease of net assets on a year-to-year basis. Ideally subset 1, revenue, will be taller than subset 2, expenses, and as a result subset 3, net assets - beginning, will increase each year, building a more fiscally viable school.

GRAPH 3

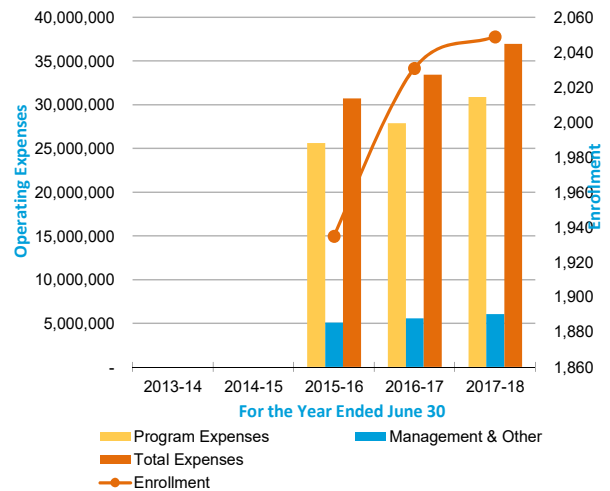
Revenue & Expenses Per Pupil



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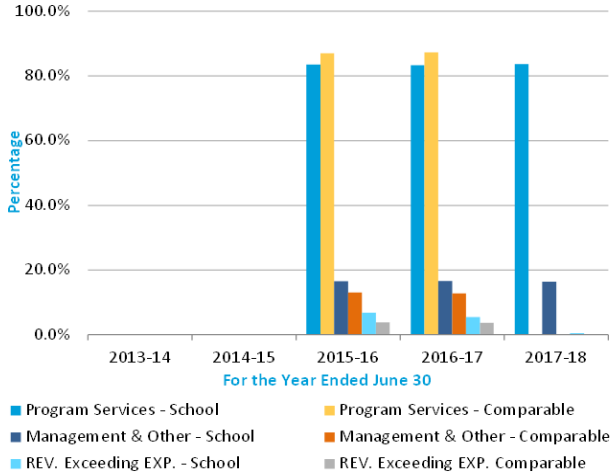
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GRAPH 5

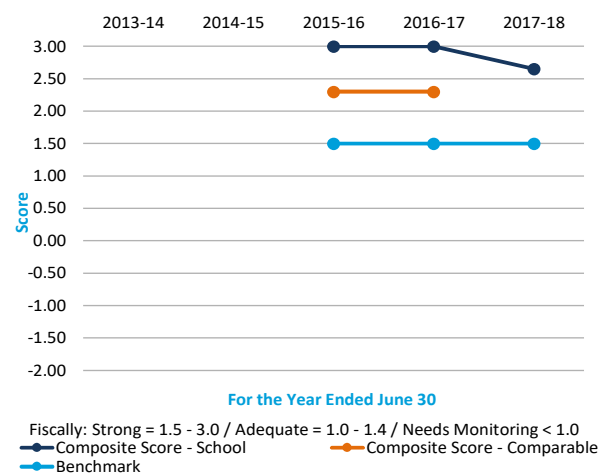
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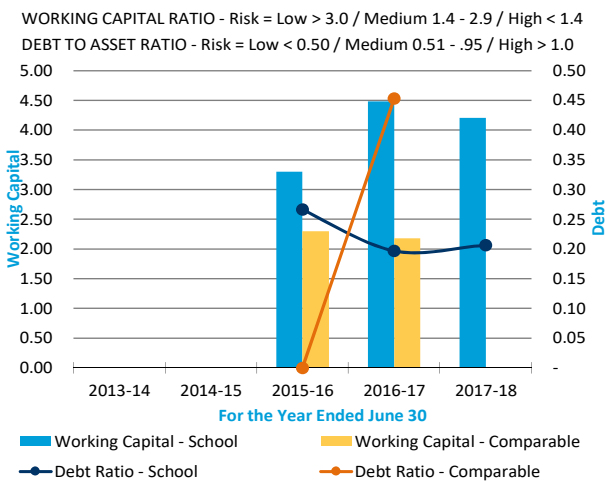
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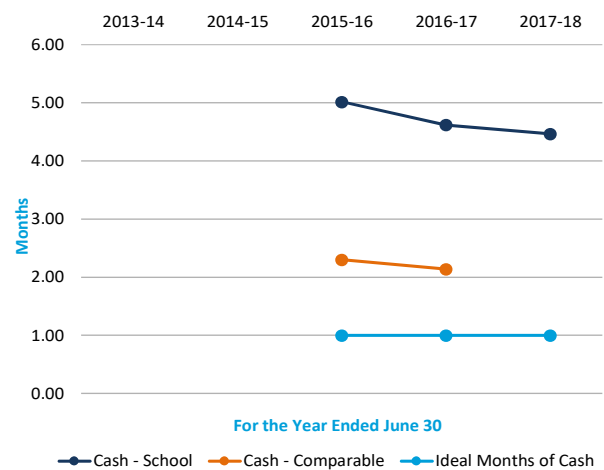
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